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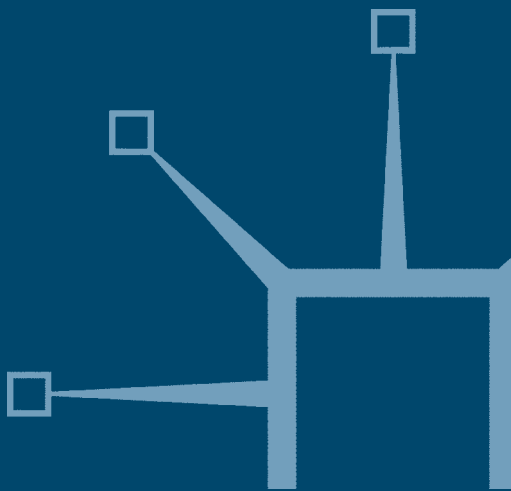
Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity

Sue Short



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This book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved uncle, Les, and to Alison Lambert – who each knew what it was to be a human being

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Preface

Various factors influenced this study, yet perhaps the most formative event was a visit to the cinema in 1990. The Ritzy in Brixton was still a flea-pit cinema back then and would sometimes screen several films on a Saturday night, one after the other, into the early hours of the morning. One such screening was titled 'Reckless Robots' and combined *Blade Runner, The Terminator* and the first two *RoboCop* films. It was a memorable evening because although I had seen these films before it was only by viewing them together that I could appreciate a certain level of commonality. Most obviously perhaps, cyborgs featured prominently in these narratives – an exciting new figure that lay somewhere between human and machine and broached a number of possibilities concerning the potential power of new technologies, as well as the nature of identity itself. Equally notable was the vision of the future shared by these films, which contained a discernible critique of existing social structures and policies. *Blade Runner* envisages a bleak vision of earth that is all but destroyed through over-consumption, with manufactured slaves who are more sympathetic than the ostensible human selected to 'retire' them; *The Terminator* imagines a post-apocalyptic scenario in which humans are virtually eradicated altogether, with the opening scrawl affirming that this future is being decided upon right here and now; and the *RoboCop* films present an all-too-familiar dystopia in which the greed and cruelty of contemporary (American) culture is satirised not only in spoof game-shows and adverts, but in the corporate killing and 'reprogramming' of a human being – one who is subsequently referred to as 'product'.

Seen together in this way I became aware of a cycle emerging, in which a prominent theme was not simply technology's intersection with humanity but its specific uses under Capitalism. I could see that they were cautionary tales, and that they seemed to be talking about the present rather than any conceived future, yet what interested me most was that such caution was being expressed in films seemingly designed for entertainment. I identified them as radical products of contemporary culture that had somehow slipped through the net of commercial interests. I was, needless to say, politically optimistic in terms of what I interpreted as subversive and somewhat naïve in their potential effects, failing to assess the limitations of such narratives, or to consider how their very context as SF films (much derided at the time) might undermine any critique discerned. But my fascination grew, and as years passed and new cyborg films were released, I began to identify new themes.

I noted how later cyborg films opted to avoid economic considerations and chose to pit artificial humans against one another instead, with combatants either selected to represent humanity or viewed as our seeming antithesis. I also noted how celluloid dreams of creating the perfect worker were replaced with comparable attempts to create perfect women; how surrogate families began to be formed and

masculine archetypes revised; and how the cyborg graduated from the margins of popular culture to become an icon of blockbuster status.

A host of desires and anxieties were seemingly coalescing around this metaphorical figure, and as a measure of the degree to which cultural critics were taking an interest, it duly entered the academy. New books and articles began to proliferate, subjecting the same films to a host of different readings. I read these and compared them to the films and found that something was missing.

It is the diversity of critical responses to the cyborg, and the effort to evaluate what that missing 'something' was, which ultimately led me to undertake this study. It analyses not only cyborg films themselves, but the conflicting opinions they have generated, as well as the critical frameworks employed to make sense of them. These have included Marxist, feminist, postcolonial, and postmodern perspectives, indicating the range of approaches now used in cultural analysis and identity politics, as well as film studies. Although all have proved helpful in helping to unlock the cyborg's significance, their ideological foundations have proven to be somewhat insecure and I have opted to expose, rather than replicate, these problems.

The critical speculations garnered by the cyborg justify my long-term interest in this figure while also provoking a number of questions. What is it about the cyborg that has led it to become such a source of fascination for audiences and cultural critics alike? What has led to diametrically opposed arguments being made for its potential as a unifying metaphor for women, ethnic minorities, and other oppressed figures, while others have viewed it as reactionary in the extreme? What insights does it provide in making sense of subjectivity in the twenty-first century? What precisely does it seem to warn against, and what level of hope might it offer also? If one statement can be made in advance of the arguments that follow it is that the cyborg contains almost infinite complexity, and precludes any easy answers.

As I have discovered over the course of this study, cyborg films are not simply entertainment vehicles or commercial endeavours, or even wily attempts to undermine 'the system', but cultural products produced within specific socio-economic conditions, offering a variety of interpretations and reflecting some of the most crucial concerns of contemporary existence. My opinions may have varied somewhat since that night at the Ritzy, rapidly scribbling my first notes in the half-light of the screen and the brief intermissions between each feature, but an implicit belief in the significance of these films, and those that have followed, remains unchanged. What proves this is not simply the critical interest they have attracted, but the fact that cyborg films are still being made two decades after their inception, a phenomenon that is owed (in part at least) to the level of popularity they have earned.

In fact, my early notes from the Ritzy remind me of the remarkable audience response that night. Spontaneous applause greeted the end of *RoboCop* as the eponymous hero states his human name – seeming to celebrate this figure's recovery of his former humanity and, with it, the capacity for resistance. Years later, I observed a similar reaction at a special outdoor screening of *Blade Runner*'s Director's Cut in Battersea Park, as a tremendous cheer was elicited from the audience at Roy

Batty's first appearance – and in response to virtually every word he then uttered! It is this demonstrative level of appreciation – and apparent identification – which perhaps says more than any of the analysis to come about the popularity and importance of these films and the figure at their centre, illustrating as it does the chord the cyborg strikes within us.

Thanks and acknowledgements are owed to several people.
To Matt Dyer – who got me started; to Donald Lilly – for all those photocopies; to Peter Wright – who saw the first version through to completion with such infinite understanding; to Briar Towers and Jennifer Nelson at Palgrave Macmillan for their faith in this project and their patience; to my family; and to Julian Keogh – for keeping me going throughout.

I could not have done this without you.

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Introduction

What are cyborgs? How have they been represented in cinema? And why have they generated such an astonishing degree of critical interest? These are the questions that underpin this book. It asks what relevance the cyborg has in exploring the nature of human identity, questioning our relationship to technology, and speculating on envisaged prospects for the future. It also goes beyond the established territory of other work in the field by not only evaluating the specific qualities of individual texts, but additionally addressing what cyborg films have in common. While numerous books and articles have made reference to the cyborg film, they have failed to evaluate the links they have to one another, acknowledged the development they have undergone over the last twenty years, or attempted to explain the reasons for this transition. Nor have they ventured to account for the cinematic cyborg's continued appeal, as is testified by the revival of the *Terminator* franchise with *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (Jonathan Mostow, 2003), as well as other high-profile releases that similarly explore 'posthuman' potential, including the *X-Men* films (Bryan Singer, 2000, 2003), and the *Matrix* trilogy (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999, 2003). This study is intended to redress such failings by being not only the most up-to-date analysis of cyborgs, and their variants, in film, but also the first to comprehensively assess cyborg cinema as both an important sub-genre of science fiction (SF) and a definitive cycle in its own right.

The factors leading to the emergence of the cyborg film are explored, along with the themes and concerns that have been inflected in its narratives, providing a context by which its relevance can be better understood and through which the various readings that have been made of this figure can be duly interrogated. As shall be demonstrated, a number of theorists have laid claim to the cyborg over the years, yielding conflicting accounts of both what and whom it represents. Yet just as the cyborg's hybrid nature confounds easy interpretation, this quality can also be seen to reflect the contradictions and inconsistencies within current theoretical discourse, particularly with regard to defining and discussing subjectivity. Although always a provocative issue, the question of what it means to be human is now seemingly filled with greater complexity and conflict than ever. Identity politics and contemporary criticism appear to have compounded this situation, attacking any universalistic notion of humanity as a totalising and inexact means of

addressing differences between people – differences that are held to be crucial in understanding human subjectivity. The cinematic cyborg has not only been used to formulate many of these arguments, but also enables an important means of refuting them, as we shall see. What cyborg films have to say about human beings, their relationship to technology, and also to one another, will all serve as the focus of this analysis – as well as uncovering how theorists have responded to these issues.

The cyborg has evolved in interesting ways over the last two decades, and proved to have an uncanny ability for survival – reappearing precisely when it threatened to become obsolete. The very fact of the cyborg's continued presence in cinema is testimony to the resonance it has had among audiences, and ample reason why research of this nature is warranted. Few could have anticipated the remarkable longevity the screen cyborg would have, yet with the release of several films in the 1980s an important new sub-genre emerged and with it what would become one of the most familiar cinematic icons of the late twentieth century. In fact, cyborg cinema has established itself within popular culture to such an extent that when Tony Blair warned about Britain becoming 'a *Blade Runner* society' back in 1997, it was taken for granted that everyone would know what he meant.[1] Arnold Schwarzenegger's lines from *The Terminator* – particularly the statement 'I'll be back' – have since become a running joke, not only in the franchise but in wider circles also, acquiring added significance with the fact that the ageing actor has indeed returned to rekindle his career in spectacular form, reprising his role as cyborg protector in *Terminator 3* prior to being elected as governor of California – a victory that many claimed was attributable, in part, to replaying his best-loved role. Such events affirm that politics and show business are not entirely separate realms (which many have long suspected!), yet they also prove that in terms of cultural currency, the cyborg film remains only too relevant. Its transition from an entertainment form to the subject of academic debate is proof of its thematic complexity and perceived significance, and a major task of this analysis is to ask why this is so. Indeed, cyborg cinema has proven to be so popular that an explanation of the term seems almost redundant, encapsulating as it does a range of films that have achieved cult status in the last two decades, and which continue to attract audience and critical interest today.

From the outset *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), and *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984) garnered a great deal of attention, as is testified by the number of articles written in response to these films, indicating the impact they created and the complexity of themes they were seen to involve. Several factors can be attributed to the interest these films have engendered, yet perhaps the most pertinent to this study is the fact that technological advance has led to new bio-technical formations, impacting on the status of humans and questioning how identity is to be distinguished and determined within such conditions. The boundary between human and non-human would be further explored in the films that followed and, as an emergent cycle announced to itself, key questions have since been articulated regarding economic transition, gender roles, nationalism,

racial distinction, changing family structures, and a host of other issues deemed to have an impact on human subjectivity.

Continued scholarly interest is testified by the fact that these films have now established a prominent position in academic study, influencing a host of essays, books, and course outlines, and signalling the extent to which speculative fiction has acquired a new level of respectability, as well as applicability. SF cinema has long mulled over the possibilities generated by new technologies and their likely impact on human life, from sentient computers and artificial humans posed as a threat, to all-powerful robots sent to protect us from ourselves. Cyborg cinema focuses on this theme of humanity's uneasy relationship with technology and it is in reflecting such anxieties, as well as a number of other concerns, that it can be seen to form a distinct sub-genre of SF cinema, one that has aroused the attention of academics for the same reason it has continued to attract new fans: because it is innovative, interrogative, and laden with ideas deemed all too relevant to the society we are living in today.

An additional reason for the interest the cycle has generated, and one that shall be investigated throughout this book, is the fascinating indeterminate creature at its centre: the cyborg itself. Cyborg protagonists breach the boundaries between the artificial and the organic, revising speculations regarding the nature of subjectivity, and provoking intense debate. Critics have referred to these films to make a number of claims, from arguing that there are feminist gains to be found in considering women to be cyborg, to the suggestion that we are all, to some degree or another, posthuman.

Before immediately consigning such speculations to the realm of academia alone, we might pause to consider such cases as Natalie Adams and Lorraine Hadley – the two British women caught in a legal battle concerning their right to have frozen embryos inserted into their wombs without their former partners' consent. The ensuing court-case finally approved the fathers' rights not only to absolve any responsibility for these potential offspring, but to have the embryos destroyed, thus utterly negating the mother's right to choose. New technological interventions in the creation of human life have thus forced new questions to be formulated in terms of rights. Cases that have attracted equivalent controversy have similarly involved assisted procreation, such as the ability to create a genetically altered child to provide a suitable donor for an ill sibling – leading to eugenicist fears of manufacturing 'designer babies'.

An equally thorny issue for bio-ethics committees is the potential to herald new life via cloning. In 2002 the organisation Clonaid claimed to have created the world's first human clones and although this has yet to be proven (with Clonaid denying the scientific community a means of establishing their claims in order to protect the mothers and children involved), it is a possibility that seems likely to happen at some point in the near future despite being legally outlawed and, for the most part, morally condemned. The reasons for such caution are numerous. Proponents may argue that cloning procedures provide a more assured means for childless couples to have a baby than IVF treatment, but the famous creation of Dolly the sheep found that a high rate of physical

abnormalities occur with experimentation of this kind – an idea that recent SF films have interestingly incorporated in their investigations of human cloning, along with questioning how the supposed integrity of the individual might be threatened by such procedures.

There is also the Duvall family to consider, who arranged with self-styled cyborg scholar, Professor Kevin Warwick, to have a microchip inserted in their 11-year-old daughter's arm to ensure that her whereabouts would be known in the event of being abducted. That this occurred immediately after Soham schoolgirls – Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman – were abducted and killed in 2002 smacks of parental panic, if not outright opportunism on Professor Warwick's part to promote his own interests,[2] yet it also calls into question whether the use of such a chip in other contexts might deny human liberty as much as protect it. As the physiological equivalent of an ID card, such a means of human bar-coding arouses age-old fears of surveillance and subordination, of losing control, and of relying on technology to the degree that it is literally under our skin.

All these events prove the extent to which the cyborg remains a crucial (if controversial) marker of contemporary identity, social relations and subjecthood; testing the boundaries of technology's increasing intersection with our lives – and highlighting the ethical dilemmas involved when such intersections occur. They also remind us that being cyborg is not as far removed from actual existence as we might think. In fact, interventions of this kind demonstrate the protean nature of human existence and the increased degree of control science offers in literally shaping the lives we lead, even if they also indicate clear reasons to be cautious about such prospects.

Marie O'Mahony argues that 'a strong motivation for the development of the cyborg is the desire for eternal life, a desire which must be older than history, linked as it is to the instinct for survival'.[3] This instinct derives from not only an awareness of our mortality but the accompanying knowledge that earth itself has a similarly limited lifespan. Science has offered a means of eliding such difficult realisations, including the possibility of establishing an existence elsewhere. In fact, the cyborg originated from precisely this idea. The word 'cyborg' – a contraction of the term 'cybernetic organism' – was first coined in 1960 at an academic conference to describe a hypothetical figure physically adapted for survival in space.[4] Performance artist Stelarc has since argued that we must literally adapt in this way in order to survive beyond earth, arguing that 'the body must burst from its biological, cultural and planetary containment'.[5] He has, of course, deliberately courted controversy in making such hyperbolic proclamations, joining the ranks of other neo-futurists in his enthusiastic embrace of technology, yet Stelarc's performances tell another story. For example, by rigging electrodes to his limbs and inviting the audience to manipulate him, the involuntary jerky movements that result say more about technology's potential to control, rather than liberate, the individual – thus effectively undermining the artist's intentions. The SF genre has tended to be equally contradictory in describing humanity's relationship with technology, showcasing and often celebrating the very technologies that are so frequently warned about.

Cinematic cyborgs figure this relationship as increasingly intimate and are diverse in the forms they take: presented either as former humans who have been physically modified in some way, as androids with organic components, or as machines that develop such a degree sentience as to confound conventional distinctions between human and machine. Such figures typically combine advanced intelligence and strength with human values and vulnerabilities. If they fail to demonstrate due deference to these values, they are cast as villains: the enemy that humans must fight against. Yet what 'bad' cyborgs are essentially guilty of is emulating humanity's most negative traits, and their destruction therefore appears to be a means of denying and displacing this fact. As such, the pronounced ambivalence that is demonstrated towards technology in the cyborg film reflects our own divided response to human nature itself; perceived as either inherently flawed in terms of a destructive, territorial, and hostile capacity or, by contrast, blessed with abilities of empathy, compassion, and understanding that will allow us to transcend these limitations. Cyborgs are situated between both polarities and just as technology is represented as both the source of our potential downfall and a vital means of salvation, the cinematic contexts in which cyborgs appear often provide a similarly mixed message about the fundamental traits that are considered human, as well as our uncertain prospects for the future.

The fact that cyborg cinema emerged just as new electronic technologies were beginning to impact upon contemporary life is clearly no coincidence. Yet it is additionally important to remember that such changes are by no means global. Indeed, the following comment from Erik Davis indicates the myopia that much cyborg theory has fallen prey to. In Davis' view:

> Human beings have been cyborgs from year zero. It is our lot to live in societies that invent tools that shape society and the individuals in it. For millennia, people not so dissimilar to ourselves have constructed and manipulated powerful and impressive technologies, including information technologies, and these tools and technologies have woven themselves into the social fabric of the world.[6]

What Davis crucially ignores is that 'information technologies' as we know them today are, in fact, quite new – and by no means available to everyone. Chris Hables Gray provides a similarly expansive definition of cyborgs and their presumed universality by claiming that anyone who has been 'technologically modified in any significant way', which includes anyone who has been vaccinated, or who lives in a technologically mediated culture might be re-termed as a 'cyborg',[7] elaborating that:

> From the moment your clock radio wakes you in the morning, your life is intimately shaped by machines. Some of them we merge with almost unconsciously, such as the car we drive, the computer we work with, or the television we zone out in front of. Others involve more conscious interfacing. Overall the effect is an extraordinary symbiosis of humans and machines. This is a fundamentally new development in the history of machines.[8]

Again, we must consider who is excluded within this definition and question whether the cyborg is a manifestly Western signifier, a First World marker of privilege with whom only the 'information-rich' might identify? From the numerous readings that have been made of it, and that are assembled and analysed in the following chapters, this would not seem to be the case. In fact, certain critics have viewed the cyborg as an oppressed and marginalised figure, often for vastly different reasons, and it is the sheer disparity of these claims that makes it such a potent source of inquiry, suggesting its potential as a means of multiple affiliation. The cyborg has become infused with a range of concerns surrounding identity, ideology, and the possibilities of both social and physical transformation, becoming subject to claim and counterclaim in the process. An underlying motive for this work is to examine each of these in turn.

With SF cinema having acquired increased scholarly interest in recent years – a fact that is in no small part attributable to the films to be discussed – volumes of articles have been compiled that reference specific cyborg films. Yet to date no single work has endeavoured to explore cyborg cinema as a definitive cycle, to examine the socio-cultural context in which it has developed, and to evaluate the discourses that have attached themselves to it. This book arises from precisely this need and is considered a necessary and timely pursuit because although cinematic cyborgs have been much discussed in critical works, there exists no comprehensive means by which to assess them, and no methodology which explicitly steps back from the typical readings that have been made in order to take stock of the theoretical pretexts upon which they rest. As Douglas Kellner has stated, theories are 'perspectives which illuminate specific phenomena and that also have certain blindspots and limitations which restrict their focus'.[9] Indeed, as we shall see, all theorists have a specific agenda in mind when they appropriate the cyborg and it is by scrutinising their readings that we are able to not only assess the discursive foundations of their assumptions, but view the attendant limitations of these pretexts also. It is additionally important to evaluate the full range of critical formulations that have been attached to the cyborg, simply because analysis has largely been limited to feminist and postmodern readings.

Since Donna Haraway first put the cyborg on the academic map in her seminal essay, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', back in 1987, cyborgs have been aligned with issues regarding gender and technology. Although scant reference to cinematic cyborgs is made in the essay, Haraway's main argument is to celebrate the cyborg as a new means of feminist identity and affiliation, famously contending that because all women are constructed in patriarchy, and far from natural, 'we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs'.[10] Intending to confront feminist fears of technology, and also provide a focus for female alliances, her contentions have fiercely divided critics, yet they have also created a new branch of feminism in the process which has devoted itself to questioning technology's ability to aid female consciousness.

Adherents include self-proclaimed 'cyberfeminist' Sadie Plant, who concurs with Haraway's view that such an alignment can be intellectually empowering, while others such as Balsamo have been more critical of such claims, arguing in

her book *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (1996) that the female cyborg in actual existence merely exacerbates the need to be extra cautious about the uses to which technology is put, asserting that 'the challenge is how to harness the power of technological knowledge to a feminist agenda'.[11]

Springer has proved equally critical of the cyborg's progressive worth, and in her book *Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Post-Industrial Age* (1996), she notably pays closer attention to male cyborgs in popular culture than female depictions, arguing that cyborg protagonists such as those featured in *The Terminator* and *RoboCop* (Paul Verhoeven, 1986) are fundamentally reactionary figures, reflecting male anxieties about a supposedly dwindling power base in the modern world. Perceiving their muscularity and capacity for violence as significant, she joins cultural critic Mark Dery in arguing that they invoke not only a nostalgia for old-fashioned machismo, but explicitly fascistic imagery also.[12]

Hollywood's later depiction of such figures as increasingly vulnerable characters in the 1990s has been regarded with equal suspicion by many such critics who have tended to perceive gentler representations of masculinity, such as the re-programmed T-800[13] in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (James Cameron, 1991), as a revisionist attempt by patriarchy to redeem itself – proving a reluctance within certain feminist camps to view masculinity as being genuinely capable of change, despite insisting that (as far as women are concerned) gender is not fixed.[14] It is precisely this kind of 'blind-spot', to use Kellner's phrase, which the cyborg film and the readings made of it help to uncover.

The very fact that cinematic cyborgs are specifically gendered is interesting in itself, particularly for an icon that has the capacity (in theory at least) to do away with such concepts. While some would claim that this proves the conservative nature of the cyborg film, it is important to consider how traditional gender roles are also subverted on occasion. The new paternal role adopted by male cyborgs in the 1990s is one such example, emphasising the extent to which masculinity can be reconstructed, reflecting an area of concern that had increasingly been voiced within feminism and which also manifested itself in other cinematic narratives of the period. However, it is equally important to question what happened to mothers as a result of this revision. Sarah Connor's elimination from *Terminator 3* is instructive in this regard, as is the arrival of the female 'terminatrix' as the villain of the piece, enhancing the possibility that a backlash against feminism really is in evidence in the cyborg film.

If this is the case, and it is a question that is considered in some depth, this does not preclude the possibility that there remains something positive to be claimed in the cyborg cinema's treatment of gender issues, even where representations of female artifice seem regressive in the extreme. In fact, the notion of gender as a performative rather than natural mode of identity is a concept that the cinematic cyborg highlights well, and the numerous artificial women that have appeared in film, from Olga (Pamela Devis) in Bernard Knowles' *The Perfect Woman* (1949) to *T3*'s T-X (Kristanna Loken), may productively be used to explore the synthetic nature of femininity itself, an idea that reworks Mary Ann Doane's exploration of gender as a form of masquerade.[15] The desires such films express regarding an idealised compliant

femininity and the contrasting anxieties that are reflected in the image of the inhuman female vamp seen from *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1926) on clearly reiterate the dichotomous roles through which femininity (and its negative double) are filtered in mainstream cinema. Yet although parody is a useful means of exposing such dualisms, the extent to which it can effectively combat gendered archetypes clearly requires thorough scrutiny, particularly with so few examples of assertive female cyborgs being allowed to survive on screen.

Ideas of parody and permeability are closely related to postmodern theory – another theoretical camp that has tended to appropriate cyborg cinema. Films such as *Blade Runner* and *The Terminator* have been seen to possess key postmodern traits, particularly in presenting new technologies that undermine both our concept of the real and the notion of an authentic humanity; in the references made to other films; and in their negative, even fatalistic view of the future. As postmodern criticism has acquired increased interest in both popular culture and academia, the cyborg has been used to demonstrate the validity of this discourse, its fragmented identity and degree of interdependence with technology seeming to connect with a present 'condition' we are all supposedly experiencing. For many critics this figure questions any discrete idea of humanity yet also represents an opportunity to reconstruct our very notion of the human.

J.P. Telotte and Scott Bukatman each make explicitly postmodern readings of cyborg films. In Telotte's *Replications: A Robotic History of the Science Fiction Film* (1995), the cyborg becomes a metaphor of SF cinema itself. As he conceives it 'the image of human artifice figured in the great array of robots, androids and artificial beings found throughout the history of the SF film, is the single most important one in the genre' on the grounds that 'this image measures out our changing attitudes toward science, technology, and reason itself, as well as the shifting foundation beneath our conceptions of the self'.[16] In this regard they are seen to have 'thoroughly anticipated postmodern attitudes towards the self and culture',[17] focusing on the constructed-ness of both.

While Bukatman reviews a more limited range of films in his book, *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction* (1993), he is similarly concerned with demonstrating how 'science fiction has, in many ways, prefigured the dominant issues of postmodern culture'.[18] The fact that *Blade Runner* is frequently cited in this context is partly explained by the remarkable degree of consonance it has with an essay published two years after the film's release, Jameson's 'Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' (1984), and perhaps the most widely reproduced analysis of the film using these ideas is Bruno's article 'Ramble City: Postmodernism and *Blade Runner*'.[19] The correlations between an emergent cultural theory and cyborg films released in the 1980s are an interesting phenomenon, particularly in terms of shared themes. From implanted memories in *Blade Runner* and *Total Recall* (Paul Verhoeven, 1990) to the concept of reality as a construct – which underpins the *Matrix* films – key features of postmodern theory are invoked. What demands further investigation, however, are the assumptions that permeate this theory, and although postmodernism's relevance to the cinematic cyborg is duly considered, the stance taken, like that towards feminism's utilisation

of cyborgs – is one of measured deliberation rather than outright acceptance or dismissal.

While both feminist and postmodern appropriations are each relevant to the cyborg and its suggested significance, they also possess notable inconsistencies that demand closer analysis and which this investigation accordingly carries out. Yet in order to broaden the field of inquiry in which cyborgs have been placed, other relatively neglected areas of interest are additionally focused upon, such as the socio-political environment in which cinematic cyborgs tend to be situated, as well as the various cultural and national identities that have been ascribed to them. For example, *RoboCop*'s Alex Murphy and *The Terminator*'s T-800 have each been perceived as reflecting the specific unease of American workers faced with industrial recession and competition from abroad,[20] while both *Star Trek*'s Data and *Blade Runner*'s replicants have been interpreted as minority figures whose attempts to 'pass' as human can be affiliated with concerns of nationalism, race and the idea of purity.[21] These readings, and the theoretical contexts in which they have emerged, are therefore included in order to be as comprehensive as possible.

The cyborg's semantic open-ness is what has provided such a disparity of interpretations and it is this central feature, I would argue, which has led it to become such a compelling icon. In fact, the multiple readings that have been generated by the cyborg film are ably exemplified by *Terminator 2*, a film John Hartley ascribes with immense cultural significance because of the numerous ways in which it can be interpreted, including its blockbuster status; its use of an iconic actor – one whose performance contains an element of self-parody; the camp mannerism in which its humour is deployed and its gender roles played upon; and because it incorporates concerns that may be seen to reflect US nationalism.

Hartley concludes that 'something with so much potential for "meditating" on the most important issues of personal, national, racial, gender and sexual ideas currently in circulation, to which a popular and global audience could respond "multi-consciously", was working for its society in a way that Shakespeare's plays did for his'.[22]

In making this equation, he affirms that popular mass art responds to its audience and the concerns of the period in which it is made, and although this contention makes a great deal of sense, some necessary reservations have to be made because popular cinema may not simply reflect prevailing concerns and attitudes, but have some contribution in their construction also. Furthermore, the significance that Hartley perceives in *Terminator 2* may not necessarily correspond with everyone's assessment. Indeed, we are just as likely to bring other observations to bear in viewing *T2*, or any other film for that matter. This is an important point to make, for although audiences may disagree with a text as much as any critic, and for reasons that will be no less valid, they will not bring the same set of ideological preoccupations to their viewing. I state this for cautionary reasons, reminding the reader that although critics have made a living out of applying a favoured discourse to texts, and disregarding whatever may not fit, this does not mean that their views should be unquestionably accepted, but the reverse. As will become evident, many of the readings that are included here contain critical

assumptions that are spurious at best, yet they are included nonetheless in order to display the full range of interpretations that cyborg cinema has yielded, and to make readers aware of the contradictions, inconsistencies, and ruptures that so much theory is victim to.

As the following chapters attest, for every reading of the cinematic cyborg, there is a counter reading, and in order to ascertain the 'truth' we must widen our focus to appreciate both sides. As usual, it will lie somewhere between both camps, for as Kellner correctly asserts 'there is no such thing as an immaculate perception . . . seeing, interpreting, explaining, and so on are all mediated by theoretical discourses and embedded in theoretical assumptions'.[23] A central aim of this book is to use the cyborg, and the readings that have been made of it, to expose these theories to greater critical examination than they are usually given, to render these assumptions more explicit and, in turn, to question their relevance in making sense of both subjectivity and the world itself.

The book thus serves as a useful introduction to contemporary critical analysis, via cyborg cinema. It is also intended for anyone with an interest in cyborg films, who may well have many of the titles to be discussed, and is interested in finding new ways of looking at them. As any fan knows, even a film that has been seen many times over can acquire renewed interest, evoking different levels of understanding as new ideas and approaches are made available, and this is particularly true of cyborg films, which have arguably achieved such a level of critical acclaim and endured in their appeal precisely because they lend themselves to renewed viewing and analysis.

There is also perhaps a stronger psychological pull towards such texts than tends to be acknowledged, for while the narrative contexts in which cinematic cyborgs are placed are very contemporary, the cyborg asks an age-old question, namely asking what is it that makes us human? There are corollary issues within this question, for in asking how we are to be distinguished from machines lie attendant speculations about how individual, spontaneous, and free we are, how natural our lives are today, and, by extension, how relevant are the categories we have used to make sense of identity. In either championing cyborghood as a new mode of being or claiming that it represents various oppressed groups in society, theorists have made manifest the problematic basis upon which identity is evaluated today, proving how fiercely divided they are in their view of the world, and how strongly contested the notion of a singular unified humanity has become. Ironically, where the presumed integrity, uniqueness and superiority of human identity was once thought to be threatened by mechanical interlopers in fiction of the past, it is now the very idea of a universal 'humanity' that lies in discredited tatters, thanks largely to the in-fighting between cultural critics, and the resolve with which they have divided our concept of people into such categories as race, gender, and sexuality (with class all too often negated entirely).

The contemporary dissonance within identity politics reveals the extent to which existing discourses are an inadequate means of definition, yet the critics discussed have one pivotal point in common: they each believe in varying ways, albeit for vastly different reasons, that the cyborg is a significant icon and that its

analysis can tell us something about ourselves. This is a crucial point, for despite postmodern proclamations announcing the end of any discrete notion of subjectivity, the cyborg's suggested use as a metaphor of contemporary existence proves that a continued search for kinship is evident, even amongst the most jaded of academics. The book sets out to question whether considering ourselves cyborg might offer a genuinely inclusive and progressive means of orientation, or whether this is ultimately an evasion of what makes us human.

Looking at such conjecture from this side of the millennium provides a sobering degree of distance from the rapturous claims of technological transcendence that were regularly being made at the close of the twentieth century, and it is from this vantage point that the advantages and limitations of cyborg subjectivity are thoroughly evaluated and appraised. What follows is an assessment of the diverse readings such films have generated, evaluating how the cyborg has been interpreted via the theoretical contexts of each discourse, and questioning how such theories and images have contributed to our understanding of human identity. As Haraway has stated 'who cyborgs will be is a radical question'.[24] How such identity is ascribed or imposed today makes it all the more relevant.

Any study of cinema is necessarily selective and this book is no exception. While every effort has been made to be as comprehensive as possible in the films discussed, there are attendant limitations necessitated by restrictions of space. The majority were produced in North America, just as much of the critical theory surrounding the cyborg has emanated from this continent, yet a broader field of significance is sought in my analysis, and the films selected range from popular examples to the less well-known in order to achieve the same breadth. Japan, in particular, has developed an equivalent fascination for cyborgs, as is evidenced by Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo I* and *II* (1989, 1991), along with anime and manga films, yet these fall outside the parameters of this present study. As will be made clear, those discussed provide ample scope for scrutiny as it is, not only in the range that have appeared over the last two decades, but in the variety of ideas they raise.

The diversity of figures included within this analysis of 'cyborg cinema' is fairly broad, yet there are good reasons for doing so. Traditionally a robot is purely mechanical and non-anthropomorphic, an android is similarly mechanical in nature with a human appearance, and a cyborg is a combination of humanity and technology – a concept that is, in itself, already rife with possibilities. This may refer to an intrinsically artificial creation like *The Terminator*'s T-800 – a machine whose human appearance is simulated with synthetic skin; or a figure who is physically augmented yet remains 'human' on the inside, such as *RoboCop*'s Alex Murphy – born human yet with a prosthetic body and computerised mind subsequently added. It may also include a human who has been genetically created, or who is only able to exist within an artificial environment. As we know, a type of clone occurs in nature in the form of identical twins, yet when artificially created from the DNA of a single parent the clone becomes an anomaly whose existence is only made possible due to technological intervention. Contemporary SF cinema has produced some interesting clones in recent years, such as Shinzon (Tom Hardy) in

Star Trek X: Nemesis (Stuart Baird, 2002) and Ripley 8 (Sigourney Weaver) in *Alien: Resurrection* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1997), each of which can be seen to reflect concerns about actual bio-technologies being developed right now and their potential impact on the notion of human identity and authenticity. The *Matrix*'s Neo (Keanu Reeves) is a human capable of neurological interface with a computer who becomes another fusion of humanity and technology when plugged into cyberspace (ultimately evolving to become more than human), while the film additionally features artificial entities residing in this simulated realm who display an equivalent (and, some might say, more pronounced) degree of sentience. Although these examples are not 'cyborg' in the classic sense of the term, a number of common concerns and themes are utilised in these narratives and by allowing the inclusion of clones, cyberpunks and AI programs the cycle's full range is made manifest. If this distinction is expansive, it is for the reason that cyborgs, and their variants, have proven to be equally diverse in their formation.

I also include figures who might normally be perceived as androids, yet who are differentiated by a level of self-awareness. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s Data (Brent Spiner), for example, may be wholly mechanical yet displays a sufficient degree of sentience to be considered at least partially human. By the same token, the three synthetic humans that appear in the *Alien* films, Ash (Ian Holm), Bishop (Lance Henrikson), and Call (Winona Ryder), although android by definition, nevertheless trouble the boundaries upon which such distinctions are based. Ash appears more humane than the actual humans in the first film, and while his motives are proven to be less than altruistic, the uncanniness of his appearance and behaviour forces us to re-think what humanity actually entails. Bishop's quiet articulation that he prefers the term 'synthetic humanoid' indicates pride and precision regarding his identity that seems to aspire towards humanity, and by the fourth film Call has more regard for human values than any actual human. The *Alien* franchise's androids, in other words, are more than human-shaped robots, they are self-aware entities that effectively breach the divide between human and machine.

Blade Runner uses the word 'replicants' in place of androids yet these characters are also considered cyborg in this context because of the extent to which they question, and in some ways efface, the boundary between humans and artificial life-forms. An additional reason lies in the fact that the original novel by Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1977), describes them as being so organic that only a bone marrow test can establish their true identity.[25] Such physiological closeness proves the degree to which they resemble humanity, while the emotions evinced in the film (and the relative coldness of humans) consistently undermines any attempt to class them as Other. Andrew Martin (Robin Williams), the android protagonist of *Bicentennial Man* (Chris Columbus, 1999), evolves from an android with a unique mind to a cyborg equipped with organic prostheses and by the end of the film has a nominal humanity conferred upon him. Although the film provides a largely comic account of a complex premise the sentience displayed by this figure allows inclusion, as does David (Haley Joel Osment) in *AI: Artificial Intelligence* (Steven Spielberg, 2001), whose mechanical body belies the fact

that he has emotions, albeit ones that are perhaps no different to the row of other Davids seen in the film, all boxed up and waiting to be 'imprinted' on their new mothers.

The ambiguities surrounding such figures testify to cyborg cinema's breadth, as much as the fact that specific clichés abound in our investigation of the human, and they are all included in order to fully comprehend how the ambiguities surrounding human identity and technological life-forms have been variously represented within the cycle.

This works sets itself apart in including such a diversity of figures and aiming to establish the links they have to one another, as well as in its theoretical approach, identifying areas that remain largely unexplored in existing work in the field. Indeed, despite the range of publications on cyborg-related material it remains a unique endeavour. On the surface, Elaine L. Graham's *Representations of the Post/Human* (2002) has similar concerns in questioning how Western technoscience and SF have each contributed to our understanding of humanity. However, she devotes only a few pages to the subject of the cinematic cyborg – with myth and literature taking up the majority of her assessment; includes monsters' and aliens in her definition of the 'post/human'; and differs fundamentally in her approach – which is defined as exploring 'the implicit motifs of religion and the sacred that run through representations of the post/human'.[26] She also reiterates the tendency frequently adopted by other critics in referring only to the best-known cyborg films (albeit briefly) and negating the socio-economic context in which they emerged.

Other critical works have focused in more depth on the cyborg film yet, as stated, they have also tended to align themselves with either postmodernism or feminism – as well as being somewhat dated in having been written almost a decade ago. Telotte's *Replications* (1995) draws heavily on postmodernism, primarily concerning himself with the increasing verisimilitude with which SF's artificial humans reflect the genre's growing technological sophistication, negating the wider ideological readings offered, and thus severely curtailing the sense he is able to make of the cyborg.

By contrast, Schelde's *Androids, Humanoids and Other Science Fiction Monsters* (1993) adopts the intriguing method of viewing SF films as a modern version of folklore, with technology substituted for magic and Capitalist corporations serving as the giants that must be fought. Yet although Schelde identifies such texts as a means of social protest, they are invariably held to be escapist also, concluding that they exist 'as the perfect medium for indoctrinating people into the new ideology, the new technological world order'.[27] Such overwhelming cynicism reinforces the mixed critical reception these films have garnered, as well as demonstrating divided responses to technology itself, yet because I am loathe to believe that the function of any film can be so easily, or negatively, evaluated, every effort is made to glean what is positive and progressive in the analysis to follow, aiming to provide balance, above all. This is not achieved by works such as Bukatman's *Terminal Identity* (1994) which tends to reflect a fascination, even resignation, with the idea of physiological adaptation and in which cyborg films are, in any case, treated as an ancillary event to his main focus on cyberpunk

literature. Nor is it to be found in feminist responses to the cinematic cyborg such as Springer's *Electronic Eros* (1996) which provides a partial, subjective and markedly negative analysis, indicating the extent to which, despite the immense critical interest the cyborg has yielded in terms of gender, much more remains to be said on the matter.

A more comprehensive appraisal of the cyborg's potential significance is offered here, including areas that have been neglected in other critical works, affiliating the cyborg with class identity and postcolonial theory, as well as evaluating how familism – the theory surrounding family structures, roles and values – may be considered a relatively new, but equally pertinent, discourse that is both reflected and revised within cyborg narratives. By utilising a variety of approaches a post-structural stance is adopted, with the aim that this will bring new insight to the cyborg, as well as a necessary re-appraisal of the critical perspectives attached to this figure.

The starting premise taken is that all theoretical discourses are inherently flawed in their partiality and that we cannot hope to understand the cyborg, or ourselves for that matter, through one viewpoint alone. Identity is multiple, made up of a range of experiences and ideologies, and the cyborg's hybrid nature therefore offers an ideal means of attempting to gauge how these might be amalgamated, hopefully resulting in a fuller understanding of what makes us human in the twenty-first century. The chapters are accordingly divided into areas that not only interrogate the different discourses that have entered cultural studies, film analysis and identity politics, but which have also been claimed as key to formulating subjectivity; including considerations of class, gender, race and family background.

Chapter 1, 'Cycles, Sub-Genres and Cyborg Cinema', looks at theoretical interpretations of cycles and sub-genres, providing an outline of the cyborg film's development, scrutinising the main themes that have emerged over the last twenty years, and assessing how these relate to other cinematic tendencies of the period. In doing so, it situates the films to be discussed within an industrial context, as well as granting a chronological and thematic order, providing the reader with a full account of the transitions that have occurred and speculating on what led them to take place. Reasons are attributed for the cyborg's transformations in the 1990s and the renewal of interest occurring now, evaluating the necessary modifications that occurred for it to achieve blockbuster status, and consideration is given as to how long the cycle can continue.

Chapter 2, 'Body and Soul: A History of Cyborg Theory', provides an overview of the economic, scientific, philosophical, psychological and theoretical factors that have influenced cybernetic definitions of humanity. A historical context is presented in which the cyborg's ideological antecedents are chronicled, with reference made to ancient myth as well as the development of automata and Artificial Intelligence (AI) – all of which have fuelled debate concerning humanity's relationship to machines. Key ideas within recent identity politics are summarised, particularly with regard to the emphasis placed on physical differences as a marker of subjectivity, and cybercultural claims regarding the body's undesirability are linked to arguments that were made centuries ago, noting a similarly

contradictory stance regarding technology's potential ability to transcend such apparent obstacles.

Chapter 3, 'Food for Moloch: The Cyborg as Worker', assesses the political implications of the cyborg metaphor, examining how it has been used to comment on the dehumanising conditions wrought by Capitalism, and questioning the prospects presented for revolt. The strained industrial relations portrayed in *Metropolis*, *Blade Runner*, *RoboCop* and *Total Recall* are evaluated, yet the critique formulated in these films against corrupt or unfeeling employers is also contrasted against the lack of any alternative economic system established in these narratives, arguing that in this respect they can be seen to reflect how Marxism has become discredited as a viable political solution. Concepts such as alienation and false consciousness are outlined with respect to cyborg workers and their role as agents of change considered. Finally, the factors that currently militate against establishing a coherent class-based understanding of human identity are discussed, asking whether class is now so potentially misleading and misunderstood a term as to have lost any impact it might have had.

Chapter 4, 'The Synthetic Female: Cyborgs and the Inscription of Gender', investigates how the cyborg has been utilised in feminist debate and screen fantasies. Donna Haraway's ambitions for the female cyborg are outlined and evaluated alongside an in-depth exploration of this figure's representation in film. Cinema's depiction of artificial women is shown to consist of either living dolls or dangerous vamps – a pattern that has been perpetuated from *Metropolis* on. Consequently, although the female cyborg is shown to have potentially radical implications as a metaphor of the constructed nature of femininity – thereby allowing a means of dismantling, or at least questioning, traditional gender roles – the extent to which she can effectively challenge such roles is also questioned. A variety of films are referenced, including *Blade Runner*, *Weird Science* (John Hughes, 1985), *Eve of Destruction* (Duncan Gibbins, 1991) and *Terminator 3*, each of which prove that the synthetic female has a tendency to be destroyed if transgression is evidenced, finally asking if parody is enough to confront such problems, or whether this is, like Haraway's idealised cyborg, simply a case of wishful thinking.

Chapter 5, 'The Best of Both Worlds? Hybridity, Humanity and the Other', introduces elements of postcolonial criticism and theories of race to the notion of identity. The nominal status of artificial and partial humans is explored, questioning whether hybridity genuinely offers the benefits that have been claimed of it, or whether such figures are ultimately conflicted and marginalised. Theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak are referred to and issues of nationality, origin and purity are discussed. Particular attention is paid to *Star Trek: Nemesis*, contrasting the sentient android Data against the clone 'villain' featured in the film – the 'nemesis' of the title. The degree to which identity is culturally ascribed, the rights conferred upon artificial humans, the values they are asked to uphold and the extent to which inclusion into the realm of humanity is allowed are all questioned in the light of this film. Additional reference is also made to genetically engineered figures in *Alien: Resurrection* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1997), *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997) and *The 6th Day* (Roger Spottiswoode, 2000), and the extent to which they challenge discrete notions of humanity fully considered.

Chapter 6, 'Heart and Hearth: The Cyborg and Family Values', investigates how the family was focused upon in cyborg narratives of the 1990s and examines why this occurred. The male cyborg's newly ascribed role as nurturer and protector is linked to a similar emphasis on masculinity and paternity found in other Hollywood films of the period and the chapter questions the extent to which these roles may be seen as progressive or otherwise. *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3* are evaluated in depth, and their use of 'family values' outlined in full. Sarah Harwood's work on 'familism' is also referred to in order to question whether motherhood truly became marginalised by cinema's explorations of the 'reconstructed male'. *Terminator 3* is finally shown to undo much of the seemingly progressive work of its predecessor, not only in eliminating single mother, Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), from its narrative, but in additionally investing in 'traditional' institutions such as marriage and the nuclear family.

Chapter 7, 'Reality Unplugged: Postmodernism, Posthumanism and the Cyborg', explains the mutual concerns that link cyborg films, cyberpunk literature and postmodern theory to one another, including their collective rise to prominence during the 1980s and the speculations made about 'late Capitalist' society. Various films are assessed yet specific attention is given to the *Matrix* trilogy, which is shown to be emblematic of the main tenets of postmodern discourse, particularly in terms of a reliance on spectacle, the inability to distinguish between reality and illusion, the technologically mediated identities of its characters and, above all, a total negation of material concerns in favour of Baudrillardian paranoia. The trilogy's ambivalent response to technology is also seen to be keeping in with postmodern theory and its marked apoliticism, arguing that while these films have reinvigorated interest in the cyborg they also demonstrate how the influence of this discourse has severely reduced the political and metaphysical questions the cycle was once so capable of.

The Conclusion provides a final appraisal of the cyborg, questioning whether this metaphorical figure is sufficient to the task of helping us bridge existing social divides, as some theorists have maintained, or whether its most useful facet is engendering faith in the notion of an integral humanity. Although limited in various ways, the films discussed are nevertheless claimed to be inspiring in their invocation of humanistic concerns, not least because this provides an arena in which subjectivity can be addressed, affinities provided, and alliances formed. The importance of a humanistic philosophy, it is argued, is its suggestion that a fundamental link exists between people, that basic rights are extended to all, that progressive intellectual and emotional developments are to be encouraged, and that our spiritual and material growth as a species is linked to ethical responsibility. Not only does cyborg cinema endorse this belief, but the various theories discussed in this study have each developed from it.

The book thus concludes by outlining the philosophy that seems most clearly printed upon the cycle and its assessment of subjectivity. The films that mark the tail-end of the cycle may obscure political considerations with an excess of sentiment, using clichés such as familial devotion and romantic love as an easy means of forging identification among audiences, yet even in this admittedly crude aim

they are deemed part of a humanistic and ultimately progressive legacy. Although problematic on many counts, including the faith placed in technology as a means of eliding fears about an uncertain future, some semblance of hope and unity is also maintained, which is clearly much needed. Above all, cinematic cyborgs prove that human identity is a mutable yet valued concept, one that can be extended, even to artificial figures, if they can demonstrate the ideals and aspirations we call human.

By contrast, the differing discourses assessed are shown to have only contributed to divisions, and used the cyborg as a means of doing so. In exposing the contradictions and partiality of these theories the limited understanding they have of human subjectivity is hopefully proven also, yet this is not intended to imply that dissension or uncertainty is an inevitable or inalterable condition of contemporary identity. Rather, we would do well to take the message of cyborg films seriously and remember that at basis, and as contentious as this may be, there is a level of commonality that supersedes economic position, gender, race, nationality and all the other sub-sets that have emerged in micropolitics. Despite the bad press humanism has received, and the intellectual wilderness in which this idea has been placed, acknowledging that a fundamental kinship exists between people, and through which we effectively prove our humanity, may be no bad thing. In fact, in a world currently being torn apart by religious and cultural differences, we may need this understanding more than ever.

1
Cycles, Sub-Genres and Cyborg Cinema

This chapter looks in more detail at the concept of film cycles and sub-genres, evaluating how cyborg narratives have evolved over the last twenty years and asking what themes they have incorporated over this period. By situating the cyborg film within a specific cycle, and assessing the modifications such narratives have undergone, a greater understanding is hopefully yielded of the way in which films adapt in order to keep audiences interested. As Thomas Schatz has argued, 'the genre approach treats movie production as a dynamic process of exchange between the film industry and its audience'[1] and while careful not to exaggerate this 'exchange' unduly, an acknowledgement of this relationship and its influence on the formation of a given genre is nevertheless held to be key. Particular attention is given to the theory of generic development put forward by Schatz in his book, *Hollywood Genres*, questioning the extent to which cyborg films reinforce or refute this model of cyclical transition. Yet it is not simply linear development that is assessed, but the interrelation of differing themes within cyborg cinema, asserting that we not only need to explore transformations within specific genres, but across them as well. Although genre analysis is gaining greater critical attention today, the subject of cycles and the emergence of new hybrids remains woefully undertheorised within film scholarship. The chapter outlines the difference between a cycle and a sub-genre, summarising the cinematic cyborg's evolution and speculating on the factors that prompted this to occur.

Schatz has proposed a four-stage life cycle for film genres; beginning with the 'experimental', becoming established as 'classic', going through a period of 'refinement' and finally ending in the 'baroque' or self-reflexive.[2] Cyborg cinema corresponds particularly well with this outline, having evolved beyond its initially radical features and becoming ever more familiar in the process. As its budget grew, together with increased commercial expectation, serious questions regarding identity, alienation and exploitation became eclipsed by a more parodic tone. *Terminator 2* (1991) marks the beginning of the 'baroque' process, subverting its previous formula with a reformed villain and expensive state-of-the-art effects that effectively stopped all imitators in their tracks. The films that have appeared since have varied wildly in terms of creativity and narrative concerns; yet although Schatz perceived this stage to auger the inevitable demise of a given

cycle, the cyborg film's fate has been notably deferred, transmuting into other forms instead, while recent blockbusters such as *Terminator 3* (2003) suggest a revival of the 'classic' cyborg. Cyborg cinema thus complements Schatz's model while additionally questioning a number of its assumptions.

That such deviations should occur is perhaps only to be expected, particularly given the fact that Schatz based his theory on films produced within the Hollywood studio system. By the 1960s the established conventions of existing genres were deemed to have been fully played, yet not only have many of these genres since been revived, new generic hybrids have emerged also. (While Schatz understood this interrelationship, calling for a mode of analysis that acknowledges the kinship between various genres,[3] it is an area that clearly requires further investigation.)

Over the course of this chapter, not only are the thematic developments of the cyborg cycle assessed, but the influence of related cycles are evaluated also. Hence the concerns surrounding masculinity and the family found in Hollywood thrillers and comedies of the 1990s are shown to be reflected in cyborg films of the same period, while a darker tone signalled by serial killer films and the 'cyberthriller' that emerged alongside it provides another example of generic cross-fertilisation – an area that has met with relatively little critical analysis. Although it is the nature of any such task to be fairly general in terms of films cited, with the accompanying realisation that results will be dated before they have even gone to print, the advantages gained by this endeavour hopefully outweigh its limitations, charting the cyborg film's development from 1979 to the present in order to evaluate what specifically changed and why.

The fact that recent films share many of the themes and concerns first broached by cyborg cinema attests to its continued significance. *The Matrix* (1999), for example, assesses the troubling interface between humanity and technology, investigating our dwindling ability to differentiate between reality and illusion, and questioning the capacity of individual consciousness to survive in a world of mass conformity. While the look of the film may be new, the inclusion of such themes demonstrates the cyborg's continued legacy. An exploration of cyborg cinema thus provides a context for evaluating such releases, as well as better understanding the films they have drawn upon. Finally, the cyborg's transition to blockbuster status is assessed, and its ability to retain audience interest speculated upon.

What differentiates a cycle from a genre or sub-genre is a matter of some debate. Steve Neale defines the cycle as 'groups of films made within a specific and limited time-span, and founded, for the most part, on the characteristics of individual commercial successes'.[4] This suggests that any films linked by thematic content and produced within a specific time-frame are intentionally derivative, designed to 'cash in' on the popularity of a specific box-office hit. While this assertion wryly comments on the motivations of mainstream film production, inferring that all such films are a bald attempt to profit from the appeal of a given success, it ignores the intentions of specific directors and additionally fails to explain why it is that cycles change over time. Alan Williams has argued that all genres are

restricted, for the most part, to ten- and twenty-year cycles,[5] thus suggesting that they are all, in a sense, cycles. Thomas Schatz refines such a claim by asserting that the life cycle of any genre fits a particular pattern of transition, with films becoming more self-conscious as their audiences become more familiar with specific conventions – a transition he describes as moving from 'transparency to opacity' and from straightforward storytelling to 'self-conscious formalism'.[6] While this view has been strongly contended, not least by both Neale and Williams, it remains the most useful articulation of how films both alter and respond to changing expectations. However, while Schatz concurs with Williams in stating that all genres are cyclical, he fails to address how new genres have developed in recent years.

Rick Altman suggests that a cycle is the initial stage of any new genre, one that only achieves genre status once it has achieved 'industry-wide' recognition and adoption, adding that only a handful of cycles ever make this transition.[7] In his view a cycle is 'produced by associating a new type of material or approach with already existing genres'[8] – a definition that suggests a 'spin-off' or variation of an existing genre. In Altman's assessment, the distinction between genre and sub-genre appears to have been eroded altogether by the constant variations and inter-mixing of elements in contemporary cinema. As he argues, 'with the development of each new genre, films go through a predictable pattern in which they are initially identified with two or more different categories before eventually stabilizing into the generic identity with which they are associated today', affirming that this process has significantly increased in recent years.[9] This contention has obvious ramifications regarding the use of the term 'sub-genre', implying that the notion of a 'pure' genre and its immediate offspring is no longer true. While the origins of any new thematic development can still be traced to specific sources, the continuous merging of generic elements makes the distinction between genre and sub-genre less valid.

The cyborg film is an apt example, for although it is clearly a sub-division of SF cinema, combining several generic motifs within a new format, it borrows from other genres also. The sentient computer and robot that feature in numerous SF narratives coalesce within the specific fusion of man and machine embodied by the cyborg, while a dystopian legacy is equally apparent in the futures that tend to be presented in such films. Yet a further level of generic inter-mixing is apparent from the cycle's earliest examples. *Alien* (1979), for example, places a conventional horror motif within an SF setting, *Blade Runner* (1982) makes deliberate allusions to Film Noir conventions, *The Terminator* (1984) is arguably as much an action film as it is SF, and *RoboCop* (1986) is filled with satirical stabs at American culture, using SF as a veil by which to ridicule cultural mores. Later films incorporate additional elements from other genres, acquiring comic overtones, traces of melodrama, and so on. From the outset then, such films exemplify and even anticipate what Jim Collins has referred to as 'hyperconscious eclecticism' – a tendency he specifically aligns with films produced in the late 1980s and 1990s, and views as reflecting 'changes in terms of audience competence and narrative technique, as well as a fundamental shift in what constitutes both entertainment and cultural literacy in the "Information Age"'.[10]

This mutability has clear ramifications for conventional genre analysis, forcing critics to abandon the notion of clear-cut divisions – with new narrative developments occupying more complex terrain than had previously been assumed. Altman's concept of the cycle offers an alternative term by which to understand groups of films linked by their thematic preoccupations and the period in which they were produced, and remains particularly helpful in addressing the fact that new cycles are continually being formulated in contemporary cinema, while also pointing out that 'for every dozen cycles, only a few genres ever emerge, and even fewer endure'.[11]

Admittedly, little is gained in terms of understanding the transitions cycles undergo in their process towards 'gentrification',[12] yet I opt to use the term 'cycle' over that of 'genre' or 'sub-genre' because it implies a continuous state of transition, questioning the extent to which generic establishment is ever truly achieved today. For all its relative familiarity, the cyborg film has never quite achieved the status of a definitive genre, mutating instead in its features and forms. Using the term 'cycle' emphasises the fact that it is still experiencing a continuous process of revision, merging with other cycles as it does so, and consequently proving the difficulty of retaining discrete genre divisions. As Robin Wood has argued, 'one of the greatest obstacles to any fruitful theory of genre has been the tendency to treat the genres as distinct'.[13] The cyborg film illustrates that such a tendency is simply unworkable, as its numerous transitions demonstrate.

Yet if the very notion of genre is now in question, why should differing stages of their development be applicable, particularly given the rate at which new plot motifs are adopted and abandoned? The simple answer is that it is precisely because of this level of experimentation that mutability remains a key feature of any cycle, and any attempt to understand them thus involves tracing a specific path of development. Ironically, despite being written in 1981, and basing his criteria on genres formed within the classic studio era, it is Schatz whose work seems to be most useful in comprehending contemporary cinema and the ways in which certain themes and trends evolve. His analysis is not without its faults however, including the limited selection of films discussed, the fact that he bases his analysis on only six genres, the overly simplistic emphasis on discrete stages of evolution, and above all the tendency to place undue emphasis on the audience's power to alter the shape of a given genre. As he states, or perhaps overstates in this case: 'the contemporary mass audience ultimately is in good part responsible for the development of the studio system . . . it is as if with each commercial effort the studios suggested another variation in cinematic conventions, and the audience indicated whether the inventive variations would themselves be conventionalised through their repeated usage', claiming a reciprocal relationship between artist and audience in 'celebrating their collective values and ideals'.[14]

Such contentions have led Alan Williams to respond that 'audiences are not uniform masses, reacting with uniformity and consistency',[15] and of course this is true, yet Schatz's point is nevertheless important in reminding us that films do not exist in a vacuum, but are designed to anticipate and meet changing audience expectations. Neither does he praise Hollywood genre films unreservedly, as

Williams implies, perceiving them instead as a 'contemporary myth' whose function is 'the ritualization of collective ideals, the celebration of temporarily resolved social and cultural conflicts, and the concealment of disturbing cultural conflicts behind the guise of entertainment'.[16] This is an important point to make, indicating that he clearly understands that conflicts exist in society, and therefore among audiences also, even if Hollywood pretends that they do not. Indeed, Schatz ably sums up the ambivalence inherent in the cyborg film when he states that 'what is so fascinating and confounding about Hollywood genre films is their capacity to "play it both ways", to both criticise and reinforce the values, beliefs and ideals of our culture within the same narrative context'.[17]

Judith Hess Wright claims that even critical elements are contained, arguing that 'genre films produce satisfaction rather than action, pity and fear rather than revolt. They serve the interests of the ruling class by assisting in the maintenance of the status quo, and they throw a sop to oppressed groups who, because they are unorganised and therefore afraid to act, eagerly accept the genre film's absurd solutions to economic and social conflicts.'[18] If Schatz is guilty of allowing too much power for audiences, Hess Wright denies them any motivation other than sheer escapism. She fails to allow for any differing meanings or satisfactions that might be afforded by such films, is unable to imagine the possibility of any radical features within a given genre, or to explain why it is that they change, yet these are all important considerations. The very fact that genres alter over time, increasingly merging together, and that they undergo periods of popularity and demise would seemingly refute her contention that they exist solely to maintain the status quo, or to pacify audiences, indicating a continual need to maintain audience interest and to modify themselves accordingly.

The cyborg film demonstrates how such transitions occur, incorporating themes that question specific cultural assumptions and conditions. However, its ability to challenge existing mores became noticeably reduced as the cycle progressed. The satirical nature of the cyborg film is arguably its most interesting feature, drawing upon a rich tradition in SF as a whole, yet the capacity to provoke and question can also be seen to have become diluted over time, particularly as the cycle acquired greater status and popularity – a fact that makes the nature of generic transition all the more relevant in understanding such films.

Although Schatz limits his assessment to genres produced during the studio system, the stages outlined and the governing tendencies observed can still be noted today. That is not to say, however, that this model can simply be mapped onto more recent films without meeting certain problems, not least because the industry itself has changed considerably since this period, along with the types of films being made. Typifying his tendency towards generalisation, Schatz claims that all 'American cinema' had entered the 'baroque' phase by the late 50s,[19] suggesting a uniform transition in which existing genres had reached their final stage of development. Yet this assessment fails to consider new genres that were emerging at the time, or those that have appeared since. It also begs the question of whether any new cycles are destined to repeat the same evolutionary pattern discerned in the studio era, whether a 'classic' stage is still valid in 'post-classical'

cinema, or whether they are more likely to skip the preliminary stages by drawing upon pre-established conventions and audience familiarity. After all, although fewer films are now produced, there is greater pressure on each to do well commercially and a correspondingly greater emphasis to find a definitive formula that will prove to be successful, a strategy Schatz terms as 'the blockbuster syndrome'.[20]

Given this situation, one might assume that all films now have a tendency towards the baroque, exhibiting a certain level of 'self-conscious formalism' in openly borrowing and mixing diverse elements. The cyborg film, as has been argued, showed this tendency from its beginning, while additionally demonstrating a level of ingenuity and experimentation that was clearly instrumental to its success. In fact, the cyborg film has followed much the same process of innovation, establishment and parody as Schatz's model suggests, with some notable variations. Popularity and imitation may have led to a dissipation of creativity yet far from culminating in the eventual decline of the cycle, the cyborg film proves that certain themes may become transmuted instead into other forms, while more recent indications suggest that even when seemingly exhausted, given the passage of time and a new slant on a specific formula, a cycle may even begin again.

Although it is hard to establish a clear beginning, particularly with early precursors such as *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1926) and *Westworld* (Michael Crichton, 1973), the first stage of the cycle – its period of experimentation and innovation – began at the dawn of the 1980s when a new group of films emerged, including *Alien* (Scott, 1979), *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) and *RoboCop* (Paul Verhoeven, 1986). This was cyborg cinema at its most interesting in terms of set design, characterisation and action, accompanied by a narrative critique of Capitalist values as ruthless, exploitative and hostile to humanity. Produced during a period of mergers and mass redundancies, it is corporate entities such as the omniscient Company in *Alien*, The Tyrel Corporation in *Blade Runner* and Omni Consumer Products (OCP) in *RoboCop* that are held to be accountable for the poor conditions in which humans live. It is partly to ease unrest and serve their nefarious purpose that these organisations have created cyborgs, programming them to fulfil specific functions in the interests of commerce and territorial acquisition. Such narratives may question existing tendencies, yet also question the viability of revolt, along with any belief in social progress.

The experimental phase is not without certain problems in this respect and although undoubtedly innovative in terms of the themes addressed it would prove to be decidedly short-lived. *Short Circuit* (John Badham, 1986) and *D.A.R.Y.L* (Simon Wincer, 1985) transpose similar themes into family entertainment, combining anti-militarism with heart warming scenarios as technological life-forms, designed to kill, refuse to comply with their programming and install themselves into happy domestic settings instead. Although these narratives recognise the importance of human values they also provide somewhat conservative resolutions. The early acquisition of the cyborg as a comic hero for children indicates that a 'classic' stage was already being reached, with innovation giving way to convention. Anxieties surrounding dehumanisation were met with reassurances that humanity itself, based as it is on a specific set of emotions and values, will somehow prevail.

The Terminator (James Cameron, 1984) stands as an important exception to these films on a number of counts. While it also includes a corporation (Cyberdyne Systems) that is responsible for nothing less than the downfall of humanity, it opts to blame machines rather than any particular social system. American defence policies may be obliquely criticised for having inadvertently led to a nuclear holocaust yet the idea that machines get smart and plan the eradication of their creators effectively creates a new species upon which to transpose our fears. Like *Alien*'s Ash, the T-800 has a patent disregard for human life, with a mission to annihilate any chance of resistance and thus secure machine rule. Although this figure is ultimately destroyed, the enormous popularity generated by *The Terminator* would initiate a host of imitators, introducing a new narrative strand into the cycle in which bad cyborgs go on the rampage and must be thwarted.

Two discernible projections of cyborgs are thus in evidence, those with whom audiences are asked to sympathise (frequently because they are heart-warming and comic rather than any oppression they might experience), and those represented as a threat to society (for various different reasons). Demonstrating a continual attempt to refine its own formula, the cycle then placed these two archetypes in opposition to one another. Schatz describes a period of 'refinement' as formal and stylistic details being added. As he puts it: 'we no longer look to the form to glimpse an idealized self-image, rather we look at the form itself to examine and appreciate its structure'[21] – suggesting a withdrawal from narrative content and greater focus on how the story itself is conveyed. This emphasis on stylisation was particularly evident as the 1990s approached, with 'good' cyborgs being juxtaposed against 'bad' versions in films such as *RoboCop 2* (Irvin Kershner, 1990) and *Universal Soldier* (Roland Emmerich, 1992). A propensity towards either virtue or villainy is simplistically delineated between each figure and although science has created cyborg monstrosities who do not care about human life, this is balanced by more idealised cyborgs given the task of eradicating these malevolent entities. OCP and the US military may variously be at fault for trying to play god, but they have also safeguarded their own position through these figures, while additionally providing the battlefield in which cyborgs can slug it out together in the ultimate gladiatorial contest.

As one critic summed up such films: 'When it became apparent that real men weren't man enough to carry an action movie, the robots moved in. You could fire bullets into them, blow them up, rip their limbs off, and still they came back for more – even as they dropped wise-cracks from half-demolished jaws.'[22] Good ultimately triumphs over evil in these films but the thoughtfulness of the earlier period is effectively sidelined also. *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (James Cameron, 1991) is a variation on the same theme, with a mega-budget sequel and special effects that effectively broke new ground for the cyborg film, yet which also heralded a new stage in its development.

Seemingly reacting against the fatalism of its predecessor, *Terminator 2* makes a swift U-turn, insisting on a 'no fate but what we make' message, despite its cyclical plot necessitating that events must occur precisely as they have been predicted. It is because of this ideological reversal, including the reprogramming

of its former villain into the film's new hero, that *Terminator 2* has been described as 'more a remake than a sequel and less an homage than an obliteration' of its original[23] – a point that is evidenced not only in the reversed stance taken on technology but by having lines of dialogue initially spoken by the original's hero now repeated by its former villain. Because of these obvious twists, its self-referencing and the state-of-the-art technologies used to create the film's morphing sequences, *Terminator 2* has earned interest as an archetypal postmodern text, and it is also due to these factors that it inaugurates the phase Schatz terms as 'baroque' – characterised by excess and extremity. Schatz describes this period as having occurred 'when the form and its embellishments are accented to the point where they themselves become the "substance" or "content" of the work'.[24]

This is amply demonstrated by the attention paid to its effects, with the budget necessitated by such spectacle rendering it the most expensive film made up to that time, with a cost of almost a hundred million dollars.[25] It is also proven by the subversion of *The Terminator*'s premise and the recycling of 'family cyborg' clichés utilised in *Short Circuit* and *D.A.R.Y.L*, indicating the extent that the cycle was self-consciously playing with existing formulas. The fact that paternal issues were featured in comedies such as *Kindergarton Cop* (Ivan Reitman, 1990) and *Mrs Doubtfire* (Chris Columbus, 1993), and thrillers such as *Falling Down* (Joel Schumacher, 1992) indicates a similar concern present in various contemporary narratives. *Terminator 2* uses this motif as part of a deliberate attempt at blockbuster status, with the 'humanising' of its cyborg, reduced certification, a modification of its violence and the introduction of family values all seemingly designed to reach as wide a target audience as possible. Subsequent cyborg films copied this strategy, such as *RoboCop 3* (Fred Dekker, 1993) and *Solo* (Norberto Barba, 1996), yet failed to generate the same level of profit or acclaim.

According to Schatz, once a cycle has reached the excess and parody of the baroque stage its appeal tends to wane and, indeed, *Terminator 2* indicates the apex of the cyborg's popularity, followed as it was by films that failed to take the cyborg anywhere new. *Bicentennial Man* (Chris Columbus, 1999) epitomises the increase of sentiment in the cycle, adapting Asimov's moving novella into a mawkish Robin Williams vehicle in which an android becomes humanised over the course of two hundred years. *AI: Artificial Intelligence* (Steven Spielberg, 2001) betrays conflicting aims in portraying a world where people hate and fear 'mechas' yet in which a child robot retains his belief in love. These films suggest that reassuring clichés about technological life-forms and the endurance of human ideals was the last possible ground to be covered by the cyborg film, seriously questioning what else it had to offer.

Yet if the cyborg has one exemplary feature it is in adapting to survive, and the cycle has duly undergone a process of transition and re-invention, incorporating diverse elements from films that have developed around it. As Geoff King has argued, cycles are 'subject to the gravitational pull of other genre and sub-genre identities',[26] and it is indicative of this influence that cyborg cinema's recent revival can be attributed in part to the success of other explorations of human identity occurring in related films, explorations that were in clear contrast to the reassuring urge found in the cycle.

Juxtaposed against the image of the 'caring, sharing nineties', perhaps best epitomised by family melodramas, a new nihilism had started to creep into cinema, indicating a sea-change in how humanity was perceived. This was particularly evident in horror films of the decade. Romantic rewrites of the gothic monster had occurred in films such as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1992) and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Kenneth Brannagh, 1994) – each intent on humanising former monsters and accordingly regarded by John Clute as indicating a 'nostalgia for lost innocence'.[27] Yet horror cinema also started to evince a darker interest in the human psyche during this period, one that was evidenced by a growing fascination with serial killers as the new monster in our midst, and through which the limits of humanity itself were tested.

The serial killer film first became popularised at the beginning of the 1990s, instigated by the success and controversy of *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1990) and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (John McNaughton, 1990). A spate of films followed, such as *Kalifornia* (Dominic Sena, 1993), *Natural Born Killer*s (Oliver Stone, 1994), and *Se7en* (Fincher, 1995) – all of which featured charismatic killers who defy authority and possess an odd integrity. Like *The Terminator*'s relentless cyborg killer, *Silence of the Lambs*' Hannibal Lector (Anthony Hopkins) knows how to survive and will not be compromised by petty officialdom or the taboos of wider society. As such, he and his fellow killers represent a mode of transgression that bears a striking resemblance to the attraction held by the cyborg.

What Mark Crispin Miller refers to as the 'fantasy of robotism'[28] explains this attraction as a psychological tendency to emulate what we most fear, including an abandonment of emotion, arguing of the robot that 'if we could only become like it, we too might exist forever'.[29] The same rationale can equally be used to explain the fascination held by the serial killer, who may have jettisoned some of the niceties of human morality but has what it takes to survive nonetheless. It is almost as if such figures fulfil a need to explore humanity at its most attenuated extremes, even to the point of its greatest depravity, yet the cinematic serial killer was also invested with certain ethical principles. Hence, Lector melds the taboo status of the cannibal with being a highly educated and refined man – one who even becomes a romantic hero in his relationship to Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) – while *Se7en*'s John Doe (Kevin Spacey) is presented as the film's morally just, equally educated avenger. Although set apart from humans in their hatred and murderous judgement of others, these men are also portrayed as anti-heroes. The murderers in *Kalifornia* and *Natural Born Killers* are more arbitrary in their killings yet caused controversy precisely because they play on this rebel outsider status. This only added to the appeal of such figures however, and as serial killer films attracted both critical and public attention, inviting renewed speculation on the subject of human nature, a darker tone entered SF also.

A new wave of films appeared that questioned human identity and the impact of new technologies, subverting the faith in technology that the cyborg film had so hurriedly established. *The Lawnmower Man* (Brett Leonard, 1992) showcased Virtual Reality as a dangerous realm in which megalomania and murder were bound to follow. Variations on a similar theme followed, and as further indication of the

extent to which cyberspace was now conceived as the new 'scary place', serial killers merged with computers in SF/horror vehicles such as *Ghost in the Machine* (Rachel Talalay, 1993) and *Virtuosity* (Brett Leonard, 1995). Reflecting the origins of this new hybrid, these films were dubbed by critics as 'cyberthrillers'. Appearing among them, and similarly questioning technology's debilitating effects, *Johnny Mnemonic* (Robert Longo, 1995) looked like an anachronistic throwback to cyberpunk, with a plot involving a high-tech smuggler of corporate data who uses his memory to store merchandise, and ultimately saves the world from a deadly computer-generated virus. Both story and setting were hackneyed in the extreme, seeming to signal the death of the cyberthriller within a few years of its birth. However, proving that some ideas simply take some time to get started, another attempt was made four years on which merged high-tech paranoia with souped-up spectacle.

Interestingly marketing itself as a 'cyberthriller', *The Matrix* (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999) captured audience interest and revitalised the theme of humanity's intersection with technology. Innovative design effectively concealed the derivative subject matter and skeletal plot, and commercial success led to blockbuster status (along with prompting two sequels and a host of other off-shoots). The impact created would revive the industry's interest in SF, yet it was another summer blockbuster, released the following year, that would additionally cause a resurgence of popularity for the genre, featuring an array of heroes equipped with super human powers, and creating the climate needed that would effectively mark the return of the cyborg.

X-Men (Bryan Singer, 2000) dusted off a comic strip creation of the 1960s, and emphasised action and special effects in showcasing its band of mutants. Taking the premise of sudden evolutionary mutation, a new breed of humans are born whose difference provokes intense alarm among humans, causing these 'mutants' to become sharply divided in the face of prejudice. One figure among them, known as Wolverine or Logan (Hugh Jackman), has been tampered with at some point in his forgotten past with the insertion of adamantium in his skeleton. Like *RoboCop*'s Murphy and *Blade Runner*'s replicants, he is consequently not only a cyborg, but one for whom memory is a crucial marker of lost identity.

It is on the strength of these high-profile releases and the popularity they garnered that the long-awaited sequel to the *Terminator* franchise appeared, *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (Jonathan Mostow, 2003), with a noticeably older Arnie describing himself with some pathos as 'an obsolete model'. The statement could be interpreted on a number of levels. In one sense it refers to the fact that tough action heroes, epitomised by Schwarzenegger's lead roles in the 1980s, became defunct a decade later, even ridiculed by the actor himself in later films. The fact that he makes the comment with regard to an advanced female cyborg who functions as both his replacement and his adversary could be interpreted on another level, however, because the T-X (Kristanna Loken) has superseded his former authority. In this sense *Terminator 3* seems to stage an ultimate battle of the sexes as male and female cyborgs fight it out together – a confrontation that *X-2* (Bryan Singer, 2003) similarly deploys in a fight scene between Wolverine and his female counterpart, Lady Deathstrike (Kelly Hu). In both examples, the male cyborg is given a nominal humanity, while the female is

simply an inhuman threat, following a trend in the cycle in which female cyborgs are largely disapproved of.

There is another reading also, with regard to the terminator's suggested obsolescence, for although he is a revamped model to that shown in the previous two films (newly equipped with a psychology sub-routine and hydrogen fuel cells), the film nevertheless parallels his position to that of humanity, asking if determination and the will to succeed are enough to beat a technically superior adversary and ultimately championing the underdog by granting him the ability to destroy the T-X. That he does so with a modification of the finale from *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975), detonating one of his fuel cells to blow this hi-tech monster up, is part and parcel of a film that is played very much for laughs and which borrows so copiously from other sources. Yet the war between humans and machines is by no means over and the denouement suggests that future instalments might be limitless. In fact, at one point in *T3* we learn that Arnie must return at some point in order to kill John Connor, thereby whetting the audience's appetite for what may be the ultimate nostalgia-driven cyborg film, with a return of the original Terminator as his former 'bad' self.

The revival of the *Terminator* franchise, together with new cyborg projects rumoured, invites us to question whether the cycle has effectively begun again, or whether it is simply playing out its last variations. Already its extended lifespan has surpassed the average time Williams has given for any cycle, a fact which is best explained by its ability to change – its themes having mutated into related forms such as the cyberpunk, the virtual being and the clone. More fundamentally however, its longevity is determined, like that of any other product in popular culture, by its ability to keep audiences interested, which is by no means a simple or predictable matter. In fact, the cyborg film has undergone numerous peaks and troughs over its twenty-year history, and although currently enjoying increased popularity it remains to be seen how long this can last.

A similar question might be asked of the SF genre itself, now one of the most plumbed categories for any prospective blockbuster,[30] its commercial success being perceived by many as detrimental. While Steve Neale evaluates the predominance of horror and SF as indicating the 'juvenilization' of Hollywood output,[31] David Sanjek has postulated that the blockbuster status and critical interest achieved by both genres sounds the death-knell for their creativity, arguing that 'at one and the same time the parameters within which the forms operate have become the object of public and corporate scrutiny and have been virtually crippled by that very process'.[32] Just as Schatz decried what he regarded as the 'social value' found in earlier stages of genres becoming subsumed by greater emphasis on 'aesthetic value',[33] so Sanjek asserts that 'audience members are more interested in observing the genre rearticulate itself than call attention to the social, cultural and ideological fissures and fault lines that the form represents'.[34] This should not preclude the ability to evaluate such films in terms of their absences as much as their content however, for while Schatz laments the blockbuster for seeming to 'rely more on packaging, promotion and other forms of media hype than on the movies' power as a form of collective cultural expression',[35] by his very own rationale these films must surely say something about the culture they are produced in.

Indeed, if generic hybridity is frequently ignored in current genre theory then analysis of the blockbuster demands equivalent scrutiny, particularly as it is now the governing feature of 'New Hollywood', as Schatz asserts, and key to its survival.[36] In fact, although the blockbuster would seem to epitomise the trends Schatz notes in terms of a culmination of the 'baroque', as well as the 'recycling' process that Altman is most preoccupied with, it is curious that neither critic has acknowledged this fact. New publications indicate some belated attention given to the 'high concept' movie,[37] yet spectacle and commerce tend to be the over-riding features of any discussion, with the very popularity of this new 'hyper-genre' seeming to be what has most held it in disregard. Schatz reveals open contempt in describing such films as 'calculated' – even though the same is surely true of the studio system that he looks back upon, for the most part, with patent nostalgia.[38] The usual comment made about blockbusters is that they are designed primarily to entertain, having elided narrative complexity and character depth in favour of visual appeal. Special effects are accused of taking precedence over any human element, severely reducing the ability to question existing social relations.

Science fiction films, in particular, have frequently been accused of serving as a vehicle for showcasing special effects, with lavish effects-laden action scenarios typified by *Independence Day* (Roland Emmerich, 1996) signifying the genre's return to spectacle at the expense of human interest or innovative plotting. If an element of deja vu seems apparent here, recalling the critical lamentations that have been made since *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) changed the way SF films were made and marketed, then this should be no surprise. Genres are cyclical in nature, after all – always having to adapt in order to survive – like the cyborg (indeed, like humanity itself), and there are always economic pressures underlying such transformations, as much as any attempt to reflect cultural preoccupations. That is not to say that social concerns cannot be found within the form, but a tendency to avoid criticising existing structures is far more common. What Sobchack once referred to as 'marginal SF' – typically low-budget, innovative and experimental – has now become increasingly rare,[39] with heightened commercial expectations serving to limit the range of ideas offered, and rendering serious adult-themed scenarios virtually extinct. As a mark of its own success, it is only big-budget mainstream SF films that we tend to see today and these are invariably limited, for as Hans Gerald has commented:

> Costly investments lose the 'experimental' and thus possibly innovative character of entertainment movies. One can no longer sell 'contents' which carry a risk; therefore one falls back upon familiar material and reproduces traditional models, clichés and stereotypes until these reproduce themselves in dizzying succession.[40]

In needing to attract investors with the promise of high returns, the result is that fewer films are made and fewer risks taken, with each striving for bankability above other considerations. A correlative factor has meant a diminishing of what is intended by the term 'sense of wonder',[41] from a means of expanding the

viewer's conceptual framework to now imply nothing more than impressive special effects – an aspect that has become the greatest element of SF cinema's pulling power, even if it is by no means a guarantee of its success.

Significantly, the SF films made today invest heavily in technology, not only in terms of CGI and other techniques used, but narratively also as the sole means of securing a happy ending. As such, they have tended to discredit the notion of achieving political change other than through utilising the seemingly miraculous potential of new technologies. Even cyberthrillers, which largely claim cyberspace to be a danger to human identity, reiterate the 'double vision' inherent within the SF film (and typified by cyborg narratives) in which all technological threats are inevitably redeemed, so that cyberspace is constructed, in Springer's words, both as 'an instigator of wild instability, and simultaneously as a therapeutic device used to restore conventional order'.[42]

Geoff King makes a similar observation in response to *The Matrix*, noting that as its hacker heroes 'penetrate the technologies of the oppressors and use them for subversive purposes . . . technology is transformed from threat to a source of hyper-active human agency'.[43] Yet the fact that the 'oppressors' in question are machines, rather than any human foe, and that the film manages to efface what King terms as 'one of the gloomiest of dystopian scenarios'[44] via a celebration of technology indicates the extent to which political issues first voiced in the cyborg film have now all but disappeared. In Thomas Anderson's journey to become 'The One' he leaves behind the monotonous job of his former existence yet work of any nature is also rendered make-believe. This total elision of economic concerns is indicative of what Paul Smith has referred to as 'Terminator Technology' – a strategy employed by Hollywood in which 'technology becomes a sort of panacea – not just in the everyday sense that suggests that technology can solve all practical problems, but in the sense too that it has rid us of Capitalism's central antagonist, labor'.[45] In Smith's view this is indicative of the extent to which Capitalism attempts to 'transcend, elide or simply wish away the social relations of production' while any understanding of history is represented via an 'emotive humanism'.[46]

An interesting point in this regard is the compromises that had to be made for the cinematic cyborg to reach blockbuster status. Redeemed of its initial threat and made safe for public consumption, with an increase in family values coinciding with a decrease in certification, the cyborg was subjected to a make-over that attempted to generate maximum profit by appealing to a mass audience, yet with the political questioning evident in earlier films, and arguably their most interesting feature, effectively neutered as a result.

In their place a sense of reassurance about humanity's innate worth was established. *Terminator 2* can be seen to inaugurate this tendency by reprogramming its former villain not only to save the future but to reunite an estranged family in the process. Other paternal roles celebrated in *RoboCop 3* and *Solo*, and the childlike artificial humans later found in *Bicentennial Man* and *AI* each reiterates a series of clichés that human values will endure, no matter what the future brings. A similar contention is to be found in virtually all cyborg films, with romance, family kinship networks and a respect for life serving as the conventions by which human identity is

understood, and wider concerns surrounding exploitation or planetary destruction conveniently ignored.

The extent of this reassuring redemptive urge, and its seeming ubiquity, is illustrated by the low-budget SF/horror vehicle *Pitch Black* (David Twohy, 1999) which features a technologically augmented serial killer chiefly in order to rehumanise him. A cyborg in terms of having surgically enhanced eyes that allow him to see in the dark, Riddick (Vin Diesel) is initially presented as a danger to other passengers when their ship crashes on an inhospitable planet, yet his threat is eclipsed by more predatory foe found lurking in their midst. As the planet becomes subsumed by darkness, Riddick's unique sight makes him the sole person capable of seeing these aliens, thereby granting him the ability to survive. As one character asks, 'there's got to be some part of you that wants to rejoin the human race', and although his retort at the time is to state that he 'wouldn't know how', Riddick is eventually shown the way by the Captain of the ship, whose willingness to die to save the remaining passengers teaches him the moral lesson that effectively saves his soul. Opting to put others before himself, he eventually succeeds in securing their escape and when asked at the end of the film what they will tell the authorities he suggests saying that Riddick died somewhere on the planet, for in effect he has been given the chance to start his life again.

That a cyborg serial killer is capable of redemption pushes such rhetoric to its virtual limit. Riddick may be better equipped for survival than his more human counterparts but learns that he has something more important to gain if he can help to save others instead. The two conflicting sides of human nature – our capacity for self interest and destruction, and our ability to empathise with others – are each put to the test and it is our favoured side that the film, like the cycle as a whole, elects to champion. The idea compounded by such a motif, and reflected in the other posthumans featured in recent years, is that if we are to survive we must accommodate any fears of technology, and reassess our understanding of what it means to be human also.

Metaphors of rebirth, regeneration and redemption are appealing not only on a metaphysical level, suggesting that humanity is neither fixed nor finite, but in practical terms as well, serving to ensure that the cyborg has increased commercial longevity. Established methods of recycling are clearly evidenced in recent films, proving that even an old formula can be revitalised if the climate is right. In fact, just when it seemed that the cyborg was a defunct overly formulaic figure that belonged firmly in the last millennium, the fact that a new group of films have appeared in recent years suggests many things. On the one hand, it indicates the cyborg's continued relevance in questioning such issues as human nature, our relationship to technology and how we have come to define ourselves. On the other, by capitalising on the legacy created by established films of the canon, and playing on a sense of familiarity and nostalgia, it seems to reiterate the assertion put forward by Wheeler Winston Dixon that 'what audiences today desire more than ever before is "more of the same" and studios, scared to death by rising production and distribution costs, are equally loathe to strike out in new generic directions'.[47]

Indeed, *T3* arguably does little more than dust off the clichés established by its predecessor, as well as repeating its central plot, simply substituting a female cyborg for the T-1000 'metalmorph'. Yet the film also undoes many of the progressive elements of *T2*, replacing the image of single motherhood represented by Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) with a younger model who is also destined to be a 'mother of the future', yet this time within the confines of matrimony. The surrogate family shown in *T2*, and so applauded by many critics, is thus replaced by the traditional nuclear family in what seems to be a highly conservative gesture. A similar dissolution of progressive ideas is also found in *The Matrix* films in which cyberpunk themes are revamped yet also drained of any socio-political facet that might give them depth. The religious overtones that underpin the trilogy are still more perplexing, transforming the lead character from an ordinary downtrodden 'console cowboy' into a virtual messiah. The cautionary questions that had informed cyberpunk are thus dispelled and dreams of technological deliverance disconcertingly revitalised.

It is not the approval or level of engagement with technology that is at issue here, but the almost complete disengagement from any form of material concern, for without this crucial element the difference between SF and fantasy is utterly negated. Science and technology become the equivalent of magical totems equipped with the ability to transform entire worlds without the need for struggle. A dystopia that is uncritical, to use Constance Penley's distinction,[48] is merely symptomatic of prevailing conditions rather than a challenge, and it is in challenging existing structures, social mores and assumptions that the cyborg seemed to have its most radical potential.

Nonetheless, despite having been deliberately groomed for stardom, and featuring in a number of ongoing franchises, the cinematic cyborg's continued appeal is by no means secure. In fact, it is interesting to note that a keen sense of disgruntlement greeted the last two *Matrix* films *Reloaded* and *Revolutions* (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 2003), proving that large-scale special effects and pseudo-meaningful speculations on the nature of fate and causality are simply not enough to keep even an established audience satisfied. The mixed reviews given to *T3* similarly testify to the contemporary audience's reluctance to remain startled by spectacle – or to keep laughing at the same jokes – and the nostalgia value of seeing Arnie revise his most popular role would seem to demonstrate the limits of parody as a refreshing or even interesting element of popular entertainment. Critics may be keen to find the same components in their films, but audiences, it would seem, are much more discerning.

Poor reviews and disappointing box office have not halted the bandwagon however. *T3* leaves the door open for any number of successors, just as the *Matrix* trilogy could continue, in various formats, almost indefinitely. However, if two intended blockbusters of 2004 are anything to go by there is little call for optimism. Both *The Chronicles of Riddick* (Twohy's follow-up to *Pitch Black*) and Alex Proyas' *I, Robot* (very loosely based on Asimov's collection of short stories) feature cyborg heroes ostensibly as a means of adding greater complexity and depth to what are merely augmented action heroes – thus seemingly confirming the current hiatus of the cycle. However it would seem ill-advised to write off its potential altogether. After all, a crucial test of any cycle is its ability to retain an element of surprise, and the cyborg has still managed to achieve this more than most.

Describing the dilemma faced by any film associated with an identifiable genre or cycle, Graeme Turner argues that 'it is the variation from expectation, the innovation in how a familiar scenario is played, that offers the audience the pleasure of the recognition of the familiar, as well as the thrill of the new'.[49] As this brief chronology of cyborg films has proven, the 'thrill of the new' is not necessarily found in effects alone, or in referencing elements from other films, but in an altogether more unpredictable quality. Audiences and film-makers are not entirely equal in terms of influencing new cyclical developments, as Schatz implies, yet films need to strike a chord of some kind, to create a sense of connection with audiences and – if they are to merit any greater status than entertainment – to cut through the apparent need for spectacle and say something people can relate to.

The astonishing critical reaction yielded by the cyborg would seem to suggest that such a connection has been achieved, although it is equally apparent that the films made at the beginning of the cycle also tend to be the ones that are most discussed. This would seem to confirm that despite the endeavour to retain interest, and evolve accordingly, more recent films fail to possess the intricacy or intimacy of their predecessors. It is in this sense that the cycle fulfils Schatz's model of generic development most clearly, for despite stylistic innovations, and the fact that elements in horror, comedy and family melodrama have each been drawn upon, there has been an attendant decline in content. In addition, where the cycle first set itself apart by questioning the kind of future we were heading towards, and drawing attention to actual social conditions, the tendency of later examples towards prophecy is perhaps their most worrying element. *T3* and *The Matrix: Revolutions* each negates free will in making fatalistic pronouncements about the future, and although collective action is demonstrated the enemy at hand is patently fantastical, in marked contrast to the critique formed in the cycle's earlier phase.

In Schatz's view, popular cinema is the contemporary equivalent of a culture's mythology, representing 'its society speaking to itself, developing a network of stories and images designed to animate and resolve the conflicts of everyday life'.[50] As the following chapters attest, the conflicts indicated within the cyborg film have been as diverse as the theories used to make sense of them, asking a multitude of questions about contemporary existence and the criteria by which identity should be discerned. It is this last issue, and specifically how humanity is to be defined and distinguished as separate to machines, that forms the basis of the next chapter, detailing how disparate disciplines have contributed to this debate, just as the cycle (and the cyborg itself) is constituted via a number of differing elements.

2

Body and Soul: A History of Cyborg Theory

Although the cyborg's use as both a cultural icon and academic term is very much a contemporary phenomenon, it is important to bear in mind that it did not emerge fully fledged out of nowhere but is the culmination of a particular mode of inquiry, one that has its roots deep in mythic history. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical context for the cyborg so as to better understand how the ideas contained within this metaphorical figure have developed. Despite Haraway's contention that 'the cyborg has no origin story',[1] its antecedents can be traced back to some of the earliest stories of human civilisation. Indeed, in order to understand the philosophical, aesthetic and economic factors that have contributed to the cyborg's development one would have to begin from ancient mythology and trace a detailed history from there to the present day, incorporating the diverse fields of art, literature and science along the way. Such a wide-ranging survey is outside the scope of this book however, so the cyborg's history is limited, in this instance, to a brief summary of relevant factors that have contributed to the cyborg's theoretical significance.

Aside from constraints of space, two main points motivate the decision for a more curtailed historical discussion of the cyborg. The first is that older influences in both literature and mechanical invention have been amply documented elsewhere and it is not my intention to retread familiar ground where I can avoid doing so.[2] The second and, in some ways, more crucial objective is to explicate the sense in which the cyborg is, despite clear forerunners in literature, philosophical debate and artworks of earlier periods, very much a contemporary creature in terms of its embodiment and signification, its emergence having coincided with key post-war developments in new scientific fields such as cybernetics and AI research, later becoming incorporated within theoretical debates about identity and the body that have gained precedence over the last thirty years. A discussion of these areas will therefore occupy the majority of this more recent history of the cyborg, with the intention of gaining greater insight through a sharper analytic focus. The central questions underlying the chapter are to evaluate what cultural circumstances led to the cyborg's appropriation as a commentary on subjectivity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and, by extension, to assess how our definition of humanity has altered accordingly.

When the term 'cyborg' was first coined by Manfred Clynes in 1960 (in a paper co-written with Nathan S. Kline and presented at the Physiological Aspects of Space Flight Symposium in San Antonio) it was used to imagine a modified human designed to survive in space. The term has since been used to describe equally fantastical creatures in both film and literature, yet a number of cultural critics have also claimed that cyborgs already exist among us and have used both physiological and mental parameters to justify such an assertion. On physiological grounds, this may include owning a prosthetic or depending on artificial apparatus of some kind, or may even be extended to anyone who lives within a highly technologised culture. In a more subjective or cultural sense, cyborg status can be used to exemplify the constructed nature of contemporary identity and the routine and predictable ways in which people think and behave – providing what some may view as a still more disturbing implication of what it means to be machine-like. To be considered 'cyborg' may not apply equally to all, as we shall see, but the diversity of readings generated by this concept is itself intriguing. For some, cyborghood is a lamentable condition in which 'humanity' itself is jeopardised, while for others it is a means of transcending what are seen to be present physical limitations. What is at stake in determining who is (or will become) cyborg hinges on how this identity is defined and interpreted.

The attempt to compare humans to machines has long been steeped in controversy, tending to evoke contempt and disavowal by those who regard humanity as unique. These two opposing camps have traditionally been termed as Vitalists and Mechanists. The former believe that a 'vital spark' exists within humans that sets them apart from both animals and machines (variously described as a soul, consciousness, rationality or creativity), while the latter group argue that no essential difference exists and view the human as a mechanical organism operating according to certain laws and observable principles. While such questioning may seem to be purely metaphysical it is actually political in basis, for implicit in the ongoing debate concerning how much we resemble a mechanical construct are other pressing questions, namely, how free are we, how much of our behaviour is conditioned reflex, and to what degree are our thoughts and actions determined by prior experience, ideological influence or the wider historical circumstances of the race, gender and class to which we belong? As time has passed these issues have become increasingly relevant and although the Vitalist/Mechanist debate continues, a notable shift has occurred in the last few decades in which mechanistic analogies of human nature have gained significant ground.

Two centuries ago, when physician and philosopher Julien de la Mettrie declared that a human is nothing more than a machine, he shocked the world. Today such a comparison has met with a growing number of adherents within such fields as medicine, cybernetics, psychoanalysis and academic theory, with the suggestion made that in using mechanical analogies to describe humanity we will better understand the functioning of both the body and mind. Perhaps the most obvious criticism that can be made of this suggestion is that it attempts to rationalise an entire species, thereby dismissing the complexity and diversity of human beings.

Yet the attempt to better understand humanity by comparing ourselves to machines has equally been used by some in defence of the subjective realm, particularly in the arts. For example, cyberpunk author, William Gibson, has commented that: 'On the most basic level, computers in my books are simply a metaphor for human memory. I'm interested in the hows and whys of memory, the ways it defines who and what we are, in how easily memory is subject to revision.'[3] Such a quote reminds us that Gibson utilises technology in order to pose humanistic questions. Although the passage most often cited from his novel, *Neuromancer*, is that in which protagonist, Case, eulogises over the rapture of cyberspace and condemns physical reality as 'the fall', underneath the inventive literary style and surfeit of technological images adopted in the novel is a deeply romantic undertow, one founded on lost love: Case rejects reality because it has let him down. Memory of a failed relationship is the soft human yearning beneath the cyberpunk.

In the same vein, most cinematic depictions of the cyborg have sought to retain or reinvest this figure with recognisable human sentiment, perhaps in order to reassure audiences of a basic foundation at the heart of humanity. It is this fusion that undermines the 'either/or' dichotomy outlined by philosophers and scientists of previous centuries, with cyborgs tending to be depicted as machine-like in physicality yet equipped with a crucial capacity for emotion. An interesting paradox is thus apparent in which the urge to be more than human in terms of strength and ability is countered by an unwillingness to forfeit human markers of subjectivity, such as the ability to feel love or kinship. Even nineteenth-century mechanists – who may be considered as proto-cyborg theorists – betrayed the same contradictory impulses in desiring moral perfection through greater alignment with machines. The mechanistic view of human nature, as we shall see, was firmly rooted in biology, specifically in learning how the body worked through dissection, yet traditional issues of moral 'purity' were upheld even by those who evaluated the human as a complex machine, proving the unwillingness to dispense with subjective concerns, despite seemingly rational aims.

Today's cyborg theorists have been influenced by poststructuralist deconstruction rather than the literal dissection of bodies, taking apart bodies of knowledge instead in order to see how they work. Yet physicality remains a crucial concern within academic readings of the cyborg, which can be seen to pull in two directions at once, embracing technology's ability to transcend physical constraints while proving unable to relinquish particular bodily concerns, such as race and gender distinctions, that are deemed increasingly important in determining who we are. It is this unresolved tension that leads Timo Siivonen to argue that cyborg discourse reflects the oxymoronic nature of identity politics today, arguing that, through the clash of supposedly incompatible oppositions, 'the body becomes a network of connections, negotiated and contested in the discursive field'.[4] Anne Balsamo argues that promises of body transcendence, gender neutrality and race 'blindness' are the main planks of the information age and consequently the main attraction of considering ourselves cyborg,[5] yet views this aim as a patently false hope, one whose sole intellectual advantage is in evaluating how much bodies (and the

ideas that have revolved around them) actually matter. As she contends, rather than transcend physical differences, 'at the point at which the body is reconceptualised not as a fixed part of nature, but as a boundary concept, we witness an ideological tug-of-war between competing systems of meaning'.[6]

Perceiving the body as unfixed, unstable and unnatural is a potentially radical idea because it upsets the logic that links identity to a biological hierarchy of abilities and dispositions. The cyborg offers an ideological means of transcending these codes, yet many theorists insist on reinforcing physical concerns in their analysis, proving the extent to which the body remains a vital mode of distinction in attempting to make sense of subjectivity. Indeed, as Veronica Hollinger asserts, despite cyberpunk calls to 'shed the flesh', there is still 'a determination on the part of many critical thinkers to reinsert the "meat" into the picture, to resist those dreams of a disappearing body which have been influenced by technological fictions of its looming obsolescence'.[7]

Whether this resistance is regressive or otherwise remains to be seen yet the fact remains that as technologies have developed a similar tendency has revealed itself, with humanity defined according to specific mental and physical parameters, compared (favourably or otherwise) to machines, and an ensuing divide created in terms of how we perceive ourselves. Such questions have been asked for centuries and were once the realm of philosophers alone, yet have now become increasingly relevant to us all. A history of cyborg thinking reveals how much, and in some ways how little, this debate has changed as successive technologies have influenced humanity's perception of itself to be revised, generating the same questions to be asked regarding our supposed uniqueness.

The cyborg's symbolic legacy reaches into ancient legend, with Hephaestus credited with having built Talos, the bronze protector of Crete, as well as a number of golden serving girls. Various stories of invincible metal warriors and artificial women emerge in Greek myth and the legacy of cyborg cinema's combat droids and female 'pleasure models' can be traced back to these early tales of artifice. The first recorded examples of automata also find their origins in the birthplace of such myths, with Hero of Alexander having commissioned a number of intricate water clocks circa 300 BC, yet as Geoff Simons has noted, the mythic roots of the cyborg are not only to be found in the West, with stories of artificial creation noted in Swahili and Maori mythology also, while automata have been discovered in China, Egypt, India and Persia.[8] This testifies to a widespread fascination in attempting to replicate living forms, with an accompanying interest in better understanding human nature in the process.

As time passed, and mechanical ingenuity became more advanced, increasingly lifelike figures were built by craftsmen such as Jacques Vaucanson, whose duck astonished people in its ability to quack, flap its wings, eat and excrete food. Vaucanson also built a flute player whose verisimilitude was equally celebrated. The ever more intricate automata that emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, coupled with new scientific discoveries, began to influence philosophical debates concerning human identity and our relationship to the surrounding environment.[9] The Enlightenment belief that science would provide

the knowledge necessary to improve life was fittingly embodied by the clockwork mechanisms underlying automata of this period, heralding a mechanistic view of the universe and its contents.

Indeed, the scientist-philosopher, Rene Descartes, uses the metaphor of a clockwork contraption in his unpublished tract *La description du corps humain* (written in 1648) in which he compares the difference between a living and dead person as that between a watch that works and one with a broken mechanism.[10] The body, in other words, is explicitly conceived as a machine. Yet Descartes was no simple mechanist for he considered the human mind to possess rationality and regarded this distinction as one that held us separate to both machines and animals, claiming in his *Discourse on Method* (1619) that no matter how ingenious, a machine would never be able to use words to communicate thoughts.[11] It was seemingly in response to this assertion that Pierre Jacquet-Droz created a life-size mechanical image of a boy in 1774 called The Scribe whose ability to write the Cartesian maxim, 'I think, therefore I am', deliberately refuted such an assumption.

While Descartes claimed that humanity's ability to reason was a unique characteristic, Julien de La Mettrie had no such detractions. Indeed, he even appeared to borrow from the same mechanistic analogy by famously asserting in *L'Homme Machine* (1747) that 'the human body is a machine that winds its own springs. It is the living image of perpetual movement'.[12] La Mettrie's experience as a wartime physician treating injured soldiers clearly influenced his view that a person was the equivalent of a machine, one that was susceptible to mental as well as physical damage, and although his ideas would make him a reviled figure, later experiments in medical science would partially corroborate such a claim.

In 1791, Luigi Galvani demonstrated that a recently deceased frog could be momentarily reanimated through the use of electricity. His nephew repeated the experiment with a human corpse, using a criminal hung at Newgate an hour previously. That the human body was prey to reflexive involuntary movement was another seeming confirmation of a mechanical nature, yet romanticists of the period were eager to confront such a contention.

When Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* in 1818 she was acquainted with Galvani's experiments in electrically induced spasms, as well as the philosophical debates of the period, and inflected these ideas into her novel. In being created from artificial means, Frankenstein's monster can be understood as SF's first cyborg and, indeed, a number of concerns which form the focus of *Cyborg Cinema* find their parallel in Shelley's fictional monster. As Judith Halberstam argues in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*: 'The production of the monster by Frankenstein throws humanness into relief because it emphasises the constructedness of all identity. While superficially this novel seems to be about the making of a monster, it is really about the making of a human.'[13]

Like the cyborg, Frankenstein's monster offers a variety of readings. Because it is alienated from both itself and its master, it may be seen to represent the working class, as Franco Moretti affirms in reading the monster as a symbolic proletariat, with Dr Frankenstein representing a bourgeoisie conscious of having produced their own metaphorical grave-diggers.[14] Both marginalised and 'monstrous' in its

relation to society, some critics have also contended that the creature is an alter ego for Shelley herself who, as a female novelist of horror fiction, was similarly ostracised in her time.[15] Frankenstein's unwillingness to create 'a race of devils' and consequent destruction of the female monster created at his monster's request may be seen as implicit racism, as well as misogyny, for in this attempt to control the reproductive rights of others a decisive form of dominance is maintained. Rejected by its creator, the monster is a victim of ignorance and prejudice, its physical difference to others provoking fear and rejection. By figuring the monster as an outcast child, Shelley even employs the same motif as later cyborg narratives in providing an ideal model of the family in the De Laceys – who act as a form of socialisation for the monster. Although ultimately denied any such kinship, or consequent redemption, the monster's contact with this family enables it to achieve a degree of self-knowledge.

Yet perhaps the most common interpretation of *Frankenstein*'s main theme, and the reason it is such a clear antecedent of the cyborg, is that it represents a fearful commentary on the consequences of scientific experimentation and their potential devaluation of humanity. After all, the monster is assembled from corpses at a time when real graves were plundered in the interest of advancing knowledge, with people even killed in order to supply fresh corpses for experimentation. Such instances relegate the supposed uniqueness of human beings to the status of objects divested of individual spirit and simply traded for profit. A desecration of humanity thus accompanies the pursuit of achieving greater physiological understanding of ourselves, as Shelley's novel points out.[16] If automata questioned humanity's essence, autopsies (and the acts that surrounded them) suggested that people had no greater worth than machines.

Science promised to unlock the secrets of the universe and human anatomy was examined with clinical precision in order to determine the mysteries of human life. Indeed, though he would hold the mind as sacred, it was through having taken part in early dissection experiments that Descartes became convinced of the body's essentially mechanical nature.[17] R.D. Romanyshyn perceives the corpse as an ancestor of the android in its objectification of the human body, claiming that the development of procedures such as the autopsy have encouraged a scientific evaluation of humanity in which 'the body is a technical matter, a problem to be solved'.[18]

A similar assessment is all too discernible today with commentators such as performance artist, Stelarc, hailing medical technologies for their ability to reinvent the body and arguing, with typical provocativeness, that: 'It is no longer meaningful to see the body as a site for the psyche or the social, but rather as a structure to be monitored and modified; the body not as a subject but as an object – NOT AS AN OBJECT OF DESIRE BUT AS AN OBJECT FOR REDESIGNING.'[19] Stelarc's aims bear comparison to Manfred Clynes' original concept of the cyborg, for both envisage a posthuman adapted to live in space while utterly negating the rights that would be extended to such a creature. What Stelarc also fails to acknowledge, in such seemingly radical pronouncements, is the extent to which monitoring and modification of the body is, in fact, far from new.

As biological discoveries advanced during the nineteenth century – and bodies were duly taken apart, weighed, measured and compared to one another – what Linda Schiebinger refers to as a 'taxonomy of human beings'[20] also emerged. In the resulting categorisation that took place European male dominance was legitimated by supposedly empirical and objective speculations concerning physiological distinctions between races and genders. The dualisms that make up Western epistemology have their basis in such 'scientific' explanations for a perceived natural order, rationalising who has power according to the emergent hierarchy of perceived aptitudes and abilities. Evaluating the body as both object and subject, scientists classified humans in the same way as flora and fauna, and as the twentieth century drew near, and the psychological realm of human behaviour began to be explored, the same tendency towards physically determined assumptions became all too evident.

Sigmund Freud was a physiologist prior to establishing the field of psychoanalysis, yet motivated by the same professional objectives in evaluating the mind as a symptom to be diagnosed and treated. In particular, Freud was concerned with how sexuality shaped social morals, family relations and the individual unconsciousness. Writing in the late Victorian era, his case studies and the conclusions he drew from them were clearly influenced by the repressive conditions of this period. While his discovery of the sub-conscious refuted the Cartesian idea of a singularly rational mind, Freud nevertheless advanced a mechanistic analogy of the human in his theories, seeming, as Mazlish asserts, 'to reduce Man to a machine of special sorts: in this case, a sex machine'.[21] In attempting to boost the scientific basis of his case studies, Freud sought to impose universal laws, explained by biological instinct. The urge towards sexual intercourse, for example, was seen to be in conflict with civilisation's restraining influence, which resulted in the psychological disorders demonstrated by his patients. There was no way out of such a dilemma, according to Freud, and existence within society was therefore inevitably constrained by having to repress innate drives.

If these primarily sexual urges made humans partially machine-like, some argued that the answer to social problems was to make us even more so, and thereby transcend the corrupting influence of the corporeal realm. T.H. Huxley eagerly embraced the puritanical potential of mechanisation, claiming that: 'If some great Power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with this offer.'[22] As an atheist, Huxley's invocation of a 'great Power' would seem to anticipate the promise of new technologies rather than refer to an almighty god, yet a religious notion of moral virtue clearly motivates his stated desire. There is also something deeply troubling in aiming to sacrifice individual liberty in order to conform to specific parameters of behaviour, for although the yearning to achieve a higher moral plane is what influenced the Cartesian divide between mind and body, the implications suggest that we are not only machines, but capable of being reprogrammed also. It is just such a stance that science sought to emulate as the twentieth century dawned, viewing humans as flawed machines in need of realignment.

Like Freud, the behavioural psychologist, Ivan Pavlov, was a physiologist prior to becoming involved with psychology in the 1920s, and his interest in reflex systems can be seen to extend Galvani's experiments of a century earlier. In attempting to quantify and ultimately control physiological processes such as digestion via a process known as conditioning, Pavlov initiated a sinister and sadistic mode of experimentation. Electric shocks were used on dogs in order to make them respond in the uniform and predictable manner of machines. The conditioned reflex was, like Freud's pronouncements on the workings of the unconscious, an attempt to impose deterministic laws in an effort to control behaviour. Despite differing in the complexity of their construction, Pavlov viewed canines and humans as equivalent in the sense that he considered both to be 'just as submissive and obedient as any other machine'.[23]

The attempt to control people in both thought and action has not only influenced a number of SF dystopias, but has additionally been claimed as the sole principle of social life. Michel Foucault's notion of the 'docile body' is instructive in this regard, and in assessing how people have been monitored and controlled by differing institutions over the last century, diagnosed and treated according to perceived maladies such as mental illness, aberrant sexuality and criminal activity, Foucault has shown how a process of discipline and containment has been used to uphold social order. The body is again perceived as a problem to be solved, observed and assessed according to particular norms, and punished where deviations are apparent. According to Foucault, modernity is characterised by 'an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of "bio-power"'.[24]

While the main institutions assessed by Foucault are the asylum and the prison, the factory is another area where control is exerted through disciplining the body. During the early twentieth century, as Pavlov was triggering mechanical responses from dogs, industrial exponents began to explore the idea of habitually induced behaviour within a controlled environment. The concentration of labour in the pursuit of maximisation of profit has been broadly labelled as Fordism, named after the assembly line production methods of Henry Ford's car plant factories in which bodies were tied to the repetitive tasks determined by mass production. Taylorism superseded Fordism during the 1940s as new scientific management principles were introduced by Frederick Taylor, epitomising the rationalisation of human beings into workers with an allotted function and calculated rate of output. The contemporary term 'human resources' is a direct descendant of such concerns, ensuring that the skills required by a given organisation are appropriately exploited for maximum efficiency. As Mark Dery has commented: 'The neo-Cartesian reduction of the body to a machine is concomitant with its redefinition as a commodity.'[25] Workers are conceived as an intrinsic but always replaceable part in a machine, adhering to contractual obligations, divorced from other areas of industry, and removed from the product of their labour. It is this dehumanising situation that had inspired Thomas Carlyle to decry industrialisation a century earlier and which would culminate in both a Marxist critique of Capitalist production

and the emergence of trade unions designed to defend workers' rights within industrialised conditions. Technology was not only changing the world but altering our perceptions of one another. Norbert Wiener's development of cybernetics would further add to this tendency.

Emerging after the Second World War, Wiener's focus on control systems and feedback mechanisms was used to make correlations between early computer systems and human beings. Although Wiener was wary of its potential misuses, the main consequence of cybernetics research is that it reconceives humans, as N. Katherine Hayles puts it, as 'information processing entities who are essentially similar to intelligent machines'.[26] The analogy appears to confirm the mechanistic claim that we truly are machines that wind our own springs – or, in cybernetic terms, self-regulating mechanisms equipped with feedback loops. However, processing information is not all that we do, and cybernetic theory thus offers yet another simplistic assessment of humanity, one that attempts to utilise scientific terminology in order to explain complex mental processes.

It has also led to a number of abuses in the name of achieving mental health, such as the use of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) that became popularised in the 1960s. Such experiments operated on the belief that through applying electrical shocks to patients suffering from depression and other psychological disorders they could effectively cure these symptoms, yet ECT also succeeded in wiping out portions of human memory in the same way that a malfunctioning computer program might be deleted or rebooted. Indeed, it is worth considering that the man who co-developed the term 'cyborg', Dr Nathan S. Kline, also experimented with placing electronic chips in the minds of mental patients during this same period in a similar attempt to control behaviour.[27] Actual experiments designed to make people the equivalent of automatons were thus devised by one of the cyborg's very founders, reminding us that any progressive interpretations of cyborg identity are seriously at odds with the medico-scientific origins from which the concept has emerged.

Nevertheless, the desire to remove irrational behaviour, to elide the corrupting influence of negative emotions, or to transcend the physical distinctions that render us vulnerable to death and disease (and upon which prejudices are often formed), remain heavily inflected upon the cyborg's contemporary significance. Mechanistic analogies of the human, although still contested, no longer create the controversy they once did, partly because such an approximation is now filled with greater optimism than it once was, with new technologies perceived as extending, rather than superseding, human life. The hope that re-thinking and perhaps redesigning the human will somehow deliver us from material problems is a problematic yet persistent fantasy. One suggested mode for such deliverance, which gained considerable attention in the 1980s and 90s, has been within computer generated environments in which bodies supposedly cease to matter. Hayles labels this desire as a 'fantasy of virtuality' and is appropriately sceptical. Confronting the assumptions made by critics who extol the virtues of Virtual Reality and the Internet as democratic and universal phenomena, she points out that 'within a global context, the experience of virtuality becomes more exotic by

several orders of magnitude. It is a useful corrective to remember that 70 per cent of the world's population has never made a telephone call.'[28]

Such a reminder of the partiality of cybercultural claims is all too timely, with first-world academics tending to ignore the fact that their access to new information technologies is itself a relative privilege. Yet technophilia persists nevertheless, with computers hailed as heralding new evolutionary possibilities for humanity, updating a Cartesian rationale in which the human mind is not only separated from physicality but better preserved through circuitry. Roboticist, Hans Moravec, has been working on the idea that human consciousness may one day be 'uploaded' into computer software systems in order to free ourselves from mortality.[29] Writer, David M. Rorvik, similarly anticipates the 'conscious computer' being possible, arguing that 'together, man and machine can achieve things that neither can alone, both becoming more than they were as single organisms of matter, peacefully coexisting in an evolutionary symbiosis'.[30] According to anthropologist Bruce Mazlish, humanity's existence has always been dependent on the machines we have created and the realisation of such symbiosis is therefore seen as inevitable. Contending that 'human nature not only evolves but does so in intimate connection with humanity's creation of machines',[31] Mazlish even envisages a computer equipped with a robot body as the possible future of posthumanity.

Most bizarre, in all such speculations, are the elements of humanity that are retained, even allegedly enhanced, by such transformations. For Manfred Clynes, replacing our existing bodies with computer hardware would improve our ability for empathy, asserting that without bodies there would be nothing to impede communication.[32] This contention has frequently been made in reference to cyberspace and Clynes accordingly eulogises the possibilities of the Internet as a site in which 'loneliness [is] banished for all'.[33]

There is as much desperation in such thinking as there is self-deceit. As a number of researchers have documented, people do not leave their concepts of bodily thinking behind when they log on to the World Wide Web. Nina Wakeford's article, 'Networking Women and Grrrls',[34] demonstrates how terms such as 'nerdgrrl' and 'homegurrrl' and strategies such as women-only groups have been adopted by women in order to avoid sexual harassment on the Internet, while incidents of 'cyberrape' in virtual domains, such as the infamous case that occurred in 1993,[35] remind us that oppressive sexual practices continue to manifest themselves, even in an environment where bodies are not supposed to matter. Nonetheless, these instances have not prevented many female theorists from claiming cyberspace to be progressive, and it is additionally interesting to note that many such critics insist on gendering computer technology in the process. Margaret Morse, Sadie Plant and Claudia Springer have all equated the software of cyberspace as being intrinsically 'feminine', mobilising tired clichés of 'femininity' in doing so. Allucquere Roseanne Stone exemplifies this tendency by arguing that: 'to become the cyborg [by entering cyberspace], to put on the seductive and dangerous cybernetic space like a garment, is to put on the *female*'.[36]

This odd notion of transvestism is made particularly significant when we consider that Stone is herself a transsexual, for s/he is surely proof of technology's

potential to revise gender as a natural distinction. As such, the equation of femininity with being 'seductive and dangerous' appears to be ironically intended, yet it is with utter seriousness that she then warns against the fantasies of disembodiment being projected onto Virtual Reality technologies, for as Stone contends:

> Cyberspace developers foresee a time when they will be able to forget about the body. But it is important to bear in mind that virtual community originates in, and must return to, the physical. No refigured virtual body, no matter how beautiful, will slow the death of a cyberpunk with AIDS. Even in the age of the technosocial subject, life is lived through bodies.[37]

This reminder of the physical inevitability of daily existence is a sobering one. Indeed, it is notable that, despite the bio-medical advances of recent years terminal diseases remain a harsh fact of life. In fact, scientific developments have improved ways of destroying life, such as the chemical weaponry used in modern warfare. By the same token however, the ability to extend longevity is also being funded and researched, with cloning and genetic transfer experiments continuing to broach new possibilities for posthuman life in the twenty-first century. The continuing controversy generated by such work highlights the fragile and uncertain nature of human identity and it is in terms of redefining the human amid such developments that cyborg status gains renewed relevance.

Before evaluating how the term has been variously conceived by different theorists, understanding what is meant by cyborg subjectivity is worth assessing on its own merits. Beyond the posthuman possibilities not yet realised, cyborg status may relate to a number of different subject positions and experiences that are already in evidence today, and which may be categorised according to the following criteria:

(i) Those whose bodies are fitted with a medical prosthetic such as an artificial heart or pacemaker, or who rely on mechanical apparatus such as a heart and lung machine for their survival. Technology thus supports the organic body in its most literal sense.

(ii) Those who have had cosmetic surgery, such as a breast enhancement or reconstruction following a mastectomy. This category may also include less invasive procedures such as body piercing or the wearing of coloured contact lenses. The natural body is altered by technological means to enhance aesthetic appearance.[38]

(iii) Those whose occupation entails prolonged technological mediation, such as interfacing with a computer screen or via a telephone headset. It may also include being involved in routine repetitive tasks that approximate closely to mechanical behaviour, for example, in factory work or clerical occupations such as inputting data or photocopying. The individual is alienated from the product of their labour and, typically, from first-hand interaction with others.

(iv) Those who spend their leisure time similarly interfacing with technology, such as playing electronic games, surfing the Internet, watching television or listening to a stereo. The chosen method of entertainment is virtual and not actual, relying on simulation or recording rather than 'real' experience.

Already it should be clear that if cyborg status were to include any or all of these categories then it should relate to the majority of people living in industrialised nations. Two additional criteria corroborate such an assertion, for aside from a strictly biological or behavioural interface with technology, the list of factors attributable to cyborg status could be extended to include:

(v) Those whose thought patterns and belief systems have been shaped by their environment, particularly the various media that supplement daily existence in the West, affecting the way in which subjects perceive reality and themselves. Both consciousness and cognitive processes are thus shaped by external stimuli.

We have now entered a less tangible area than previous categories, with cyborg status, in this more ideological sense, confronting the notion of individuality within 'mass society'. The final category reiterates the metaphorical implications of cyborghood as an expression of conformity, including as it does:

(vi) Those whose behavioural patterns have been shaped or conditioned by social laws, familial experiences and cultural conditions. Behaviour is learned through social institutions and reinforced by both legal sanction and the approval or disapproval of fellow citizens. Freedom of movement and expression are curtailed by convention and expectation, the rules of which work on a par with programming.

With these categories in mind, the contention that we are all cyborgs appears to be an inescapable fact. The factors that shape potential cyborg status thus move from a strictly hypothetical assertion to commenting on present realities of existence, indicating the extent to which our lives are shaped by both the technology that surrounds us and the environment in which we live. These factors are considered to be worth outlining because they indicate the multiplicity of levels by which the cyborg may be used to describe contemporary social conditions and experiences. Before the interpretations of various theorists are necessarily deemed relevant or otherwise, the potential significance of these categories is worth consideration, particularly as cyborghood has led to such diverse, even contradictory, assumptions.

The impact of new technologies on human identity is a key issue for cultural theorists, one that has frequently been speculated on in SF cinema and which has consequently led to increased academic interest in the genre. In response to the question, 'how does a culture understand or process new modes of subjectivity?', Hayles suggests that it is primarily through the stories it tells that a new means of orientation becomes broached.[39] The stories told in the cyborg films produced from 1979 to the present are illuminating in this respect, for they largely suggest

that humanity must adapt if it is to survive and that cyborg status may even be preferable to ordinary existence. *The Terminator* cyborg's central appeal, according to Sean French, lies in the aggressive machismo, superior strength and transgressive behaviour exhibited by this character.[40] The terminator does not need to queue to use the telephone, respond politely to his landlord's questions or require currency to obtain guns and ammunition. Moreover, the fact that 'he' does not, as Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) points out in the film, 'feel pity, or remorse, or fear' serves as a distinct advantage to survival, proving that cyborg status, rather than being a lamentable condition of constrained behaviour, may equally invoke an empowered mode of existence. Yet the antipathy held by this figure towards human life, as much as social mores, clearly provides an unsustainable formula for existence and the majority of cyborg narratives have attempted to offset Neitschean overtones by inflecting positive human emotions into these tales, claiming that technology and humanity can be positively reconciled. Rather than enable a 'new means of orientation', as Hayles asserts, these stories fuse together the diverse historical arguments surrounding human nature and its projected kinship with machines, seeking to combine seemingly incompatible urges. The advantages of having greater physical resilience are thus celebrated in cyborg texts, yet accompanied by a demonstration of specific ideals and emotions intended to prove the necessary vitality of such beings. The cinematic cyborg consequently allows mechanistic interpretations of humanity without losing a sense of uniqueness located in individual consciousness and empathy – allowing a means to bridge the mind/body divide.

The cyborg's incorporation into academic discourse has proved this barrier to be more troublesome however. In fact, theoretical interpretations of this figure demonstrate how the attempt to determine identity is now an infinitely complex area. A variety of theoretical positions have become established, discrediting the notion of any singular subjectivity that might be called human, all of which have become inflected onto the cyborg. Particularly prominent over the last decade are critical concerns regarding gender and race, which have utilised the cyborg to question how natural these divisions are and to speculate on technology's potential to refute or simply reinforce such distinctions, yet even critics with the same preoccupations have disagreed violently about such prospects.

The fact that little consensus is found, even within specific discursive realms, has lent support to the postmodern belief that any attempt to explain identity or existence is now a hopeless endeavour. This is in keeping with an intellectual position that is characterised by a generalised sense of disenchantment not only with the notion of progress, but with the perceived relevance of any contemporary epistemologies, the result of which is a pronounced ideological impasse. As Alison Adam succinctly puts it: 'if no type of knowledge is, at bottom, better than another, and if the subject is dead, then what can be said with confidence about the knower and the known?'[41] Because existing types of knowledge are ideologically separated from one another within academic discourse, and via the set of assumptions through which they define themselves, they are left to compete over notions of power and subjectivity, resulting in an increasingly fragmented understanding of humanity.

Since the 1970s various discourses have sought to question subjectivity and the basis upon which it should be understood, yet with the result that any definitive statement about people and power has become increasingly difficult to make. A unified understanding of human identity is thus de-limited and has clearly become inflected within cyborg theory. Despite emanating from a scientific worldview that sought to make humans increasingly knowable, the cyborg appears to have produced a pronounced uncertainty with regard to identity, thanks in part to its own paradoxical nature as much as the diversity of critical evaluations made of this figure. Most ironically, while the attempt to define humanity has produced more options to choose from than ever, it has also yielded less likelihood of generating any sense of coherence.

If uncertainty reigned a few centuries ago concerning the degree to which humans resembled machines it is now even more in evidence, with theorists proving unwilling or unable to adopt a consistent stance, even in their view of technology. Clearly, the attempt to prioritise any single discourse as universally applicable is loaded with difficulty, particularly given internal tensions and inconsistencies, yet in reappraising the theories that have been used to articulate questions of power, and which have, in turn, become amalgamated within cyborg theory, the opportunity is provided to re-view ourselves in the light of these discourses and the conditions in which they were formulated. The contradictions and uncertainties evident in each, particularly with regard to technology's impact on identity, embodiment and the future, amply demonstrates why cyborg status remains so contested and so fascinating. Yet a closer look at the respective discourses applied to the cyborg also indicates that they are not as disparate as they might seem.

If uncertainty is the main response that the promise of new technologies generate today, it is a lingering habit. During the industrial revolution machines were not only regarded by many as a threat to jobs and established ways of life, but also encapsulated what Capitalism wanted to make of its workers. As Claudia Springer has argued, this period in history marked a significant shift in terms of how humanity was perceived, 'for the Victorian proponents of industrialisation, for whom human bodies constituted first and foremost an exploitable labour force, machines improved on what they saw as the deficiencies of human workers'.[42] The result of this rationalisation of labour was the isolation and disenfranchisement that Marx referred to as alienation. Yet it is important to remember that Marx was not against technology *per se*, but in the way it was used to dehumanise workers under Capitalism. Indeed, far from seeing Fordism and Marxism as being at odds with one another, Pam Rosenthal perceives both to be modernist ideologies that each utilise technology in order to achieve a better future.[43] Both are labelled as 'Gernsbackian' because they idealise technology's potential in the same way as the utopian SF writer, Hugo Gernsback, did in his stories. In Rosenthal's view, all such technoutopian myths are anachronistic, arguing that 'any liberatory post-Fordist politics' must seek a solution beyond technology itself and find a means of 'understanding difficult practical issues of work and identity'.[44]

One such issue is the impact that new work practices, partly thanks to changes wrought by new technologies, have had on our political understanding of

identity. The shift in production to other countries and the rise in clerical and service sector posts in the West has affected how class relations are now evaluated. The body at work in shops and offices no longer signifies exploitation in the same obvious manner as the factory worker, and the effects of globalisation have additionally fragmented any notion of working-class solidarity, all of which results in the traditional Marxist view of an oppressed group who are economically subordinate, ideologically acquiescent and physically constrained – and who will inevitably come to realise their position and combine to resist it – having lost the impact it once had.

Although Rosenthal claims that we would search in vain to find a political response to Capitalism in 'popular presentations of the bad new future',[45] the cinematic cyborg powerfully addresses neglected issues of exploitation and alienation, usefully symbolising Marx's concept of the alienated worker through being programmed and rebuilt in the interests of Capitalism. While such narratives do not suggest an alternative economic system, they make the important point that technology can be used to both repress and enable the cyborg worker, with such figures invariably relying upon a modified humanism to exist within a technologised world, which is shown to equip them with the means for resistance and survival. In doing so a degree of Gernsbackian optimism is shown to be far from outmoded, despite Rosenthal's claims, particularly when technology and humanity can be aligned together.

Nevertheless it remains the case that technology's ideological and material importance cuts across the political spectrum. Eric J. Cassidy has typified general misconceptions about this topic by attempting to delineate attitudes to technology based on political perspective, aligning the Left with humanism and technophobia and the Right with posthuman technophilia.[46] Such a claim is fundamentally flawed however, not only because humanism is far from anti-technological in its stance, but also because, as the work of Mark Dery, Scott Bukatman and Andrew Ross demonstrates, the progressive potential of technology has been embraced by differing groups on the subcultural Left, as well as by academics with similar political leanings. Such tendencies may be accused of falsely investing in the 'radical' quality of new technologies (and ignoring the inequities of the economic system under which they are produced), yet they also prove that a simplistic Left/Right divide with respect to technology cannot be supported. The legacy of the Gernsbackian future thus continues unabated and is imprinted onto the figure of the cyborg, who may be exploited in some scenarios but is also found to be capable of resistance, even if their social position is not as clear-cut as traditional Marxist theory had assumed.

The influence of feminism is equally crucial to the development of cyborg theory, and similarly riddled with contradictions. The body politics that originated in the women's movement of the 1970s focused on how patriarchy marginalised women on the grounds of physical difference. Feminist theorists extended the Marxist concept of exploitation to form a new agenda with respect to power in society, developing an understanding of oppression beyond industrial relations. With regard to technology however, feminists were starkly divided. For some, technology was

a means of effacing biological distinctions while others maintained that it was intrinsically patriarchal and therefore oppressive to women. Hence, while Haraway's view of technological empowerment upholds Shulamith Firestone's contention that biological differences must be transcended via technology if equality is to be achieved,[47] critics such as Patronico Schweickart have made the problematic assumption that science and technology 'exude a masculine aura' – thereby perpetuating essentialist divisions.[48]

The result of such disparity is that 'cyborg consciousness' as a progressive means of forming alliances is rendered tenuous at best. Haraway's ideas have generated controversy rather than kinship among feminists, and the diverse claims made for the cyborg have created even further divisions. More interesting still is the way in which the female body has become foregrounded in some quarters of feminist thinking as integral to feminist identity. Balsamo exemplifies this stance in evincing concern that postmodern discourse, with its stress on the virtual and hyperreal, is working in the interests of patriarchy to obscure the ideological gains made within feminism, particularly with regard to physicality. As she argues, 'faced with the prospect of being strategically eclipsed within the modern episteme . . . feminists have a political stake in constructing and critiquing theories of the body within postmodernism'.[49]

The concept of the body as an ideological battleground recalls the feminist rallying cry of the 1970s, yet what Balsamo terms as 'corporeal feminism' is confused in its aims, seeking to recuperate the body in contemporary feminist discourse without upholding essentialist definitions of gender. That physicality is seemingly paramount to women's potential affiliation with one another would seem to support a regressive essentialism however, and exemplifies the drawbacks of theorists attempting to reinsert the 'meat' (as Hollinger puts it) into current debate. Furthermore, Balsamo's assessment of postmodernism as threatening to eclipse feminist concerns stands in direct contrast with critics such as Judith Halberstam who contend that 'feminism and postmodernism enjoy a mutual dependence within the academy and in relation to mass culture'.[50]

Given such dissension, any chance of acknowledging a unified and inclusive subjectivity seems defunct from the start, and with it the chance to establish and build upon a progressive politics, for the inability to identify any vested interests between groups precludes the common ground needed to achieve social change. A concomitant part of this problem is that a common cause cannot be agreed when factionalism is so rife. Rather than seeking to form affiliations, theorists have tended to entrench differences based on factors such as class, gender or ethnic division, yet the cyborg remains a potentially powerful metaphor nevertheless, simply because it has been appropriated by representatives of all these groups. Its usefulness as a symbol of unity cannot therefore be negated, even if a number of theorists still view such aims with suspicion.

The idea that we might all be considered cyborg on the grounds that cultural hybridity is now the norm, and that people are, in any case, a mishmash of identities, would seem to suggest a potent means of re-thinking identity, one that might even afford mutual affiliations, yet this concept has provoked intense

concern in some quarters. Hence, despite acknowledging that 'hybrid beings are what we have always been',[51] Jennifer Gonzalez questions whether racial distinctions might be rendered obsolete via the cyborg, arguing that 'the problem with this kind of e-race-sure is that it assumes differences between individuals and groups to be primarily superficial – literally skin deep'.[52] Like Balsamo's insistence that women are defined by their bodies, Gonzalez patrols similarly regressive borders, proving unable to relinquish the race-marked body as a fundamental division (whether it be skin deep or beyond). As she queries 'are there important differences between people (and cyborgs), or are people (and cyborgs) in some necessary way the same?' – only to conclude that 'the answers to this two-part question must be yes, and yes'.[53] The cyborg lies within the contradiction of these two positions and as Gonzalez asserts, cannot resolve them, particularly within the tautology created by her own critique, one that ultimately refuses hybridity and leaves any scope for commonality or kinship beyond racial boundaries untenable.

Chela Sandoval has similarly interrogated the claims made for a progressive cyborg politics by asking: 'What constitutes "resistance" and oppositional politics under the imperatives of political, economic and cultural transnationalization?'[54] After pointing out that 'theories of opposition' have been formulated throughout the twentieth century, Sandoval equates cyborg embodiment with workers labouring within routinised industries, stating:

> I begin here to honor the muscles and sinews of workers who grow tired in the required repetitions, in the warehouses, assembly lines, administrative cells, and computer networks that run the great electronic firms of the late twentieth century. These workers know the pain of the union of machine and bodily tissue, the robotic conditions, and in the late twentieth century, the cyborg conditions under which the notion of human agency must take on new meanings.[55]

At first sight, Sandoval appears to interpret cyborghood as a new term for the 'high-tech' proletariat working within modern industry, yet further investigation reveals another agenda. Focusing specifically on North America, Sandoval points out that the majority of these workers are non-Caucasian, further asserting that, as 'colonised people of the Americas', they have formulated both resistance and accommodation constituted by 'the cyborg skills required for survival under technohuman conditions' for the last 300 years.[56] Cyborg status, as she thus makes clear, is by no means the contemporary phenomenon some would have us believe, but is instead the result of ongoing Western imperialism. In contrast to Gonzalez, who appears to read cyborgs as a product of 'Euro-American' anxiety about the mixing of races, Sandoval employs cyborg identity as a new signifier of black oppression. However, she also claims to have wider ambitions than a strictly postcolonial reading of this metaphor, and in order to challenge what she aptly terms as 'the apartheid of theoretical domains in the academy',[57] Sandoval conceives of an 'oppositional cyborg politics' that is seemingly inclusive, attempting

to generate affiliations, not only between traditional minority groups, but which 'could very well bring the politics of the alienated white male subject into alliance with the subaltern politics of US third world feminism'.[58] Such a possibility, given the aforementioned climate of dissension, is potentially radical in its implications, demonstrating a cyborg politics that could cross the domains of race and gender. The only drawback is the strategy proposed, for Sandoval neglects mentioning how such groups might be brought together and suggests instead a mode of resistance consisting of semiotics, deconstruction and a 'sense of impending ethical and political changes'[59] – all of which remain abstract in the extreme.

Some would argue that the only transition that needs to take place is our own attitude to change, and with it an acceptance of our kinship with machines. Mazlish has contended that humanity's evolution must be seen on a par with that of the machines it has built, claiming that we cannot separate ourselves from the technology that has both altered and informed our existence. There is an unavoidable logic to this view for it argues that, since acquiring the ability to make tools, our development has become interlinked with that of machines, an idea that is proven by the fact that computers and robots are built along the same patterns as organic life. Mazlish asserts that, because of such mutual development, we now have more in common with our machines than that which separates us, and argues that realising and accepting this point is 'essential for our harmoniously coming to terms with an industrialised world'.[60]

It is perhaps in order to aid this harmonious understanding (and exemplify the continuum that Mazlish claims links us to technologies) that cinema has produced cyborg figures that are not only sympathetic to human existence but necessary to its continuation, eliminating any figures that pose a threat to humanity while simultaneously suggesting that there are specific human qualities that, far from being threatened by technology, may actually be preserved through it instead. By inferring that new life-forms might even grow to emulate humanity's finer characteristics, the implicit understanding is that an intrinsic 'human' quality will always triumph.

It is this notion that Forest Pyle refers to in his essay, 'Making Cyborgs, Making Humans', arguing that in such gestures as the thumbs up salute offered by the re-programmed terminator at the end of *Terminator 2* a modified humanism results which 'bind[s] the human deeply to its other'.[61] The reassurance offered by such mimicry lies at the heart of cinema's anthropomorphisation of technology: reinforcing human gestures and values as if to suggest that there could be no better model to draw upon than ourselves. Yet the idea of an integral human essence also becomes compromised by such depictions, for as Pyle asserts, 'these films demonstrate that when we make cyborgs – at least when we make them in movies – we also make and, on occasion, unmake our conceptions of ourselves'.[62] The blurring of boundaries between human and machine that ensues thus has the progressive ability of undermining the oppositions that have hitherto constructed our understanding of the world. By extension, if seemingly intrinsic differences between humans and machines cannot be upheld, then the veracity of other distinctions between people is also disproved. The cyborg film

can thus help to encourage a reassessment of ourselves based on commonality rather than conflict.

J.P. Telotte similarly views cyborg cinema as a reflection of cultural concerns, arguing that we might conceive of it as 'itself a kind of robotic servant on which we are coming to depend'.[63] Telotte suggests that we need such a means of reorientation to help us remember what being human actually means. As contested as such a subject is always likely to be, the ideas raised by cyborg narratives may nevertheless help to shape awareness and understanding, on both a personal and political basis, of both the world and our place in it. It is in this questioning ability that the cyborg's most progressive potential lies, posing fundamental questions about identity and existence in the twenty-first century.

By contrast, the majority of critics writing on the cyborg have failed to examine new modes of identity and affiliation enabled by this metaphor, insisting instead on making existing distinctions more deeply entrenched than ever. Even in the range of assertions made about cyborg status, physical differences are still used to perpetuate ideological dissension, proving our inability to truly separate mind and body, even in the virtual realm of intellectual speculation. Because, as Stone contends, life is lived through bodies, they obviously matter and cannot be ignored. Yet a lamentable tendency within academic assessments of the cyborg has insisted on foregrounding regressive ideas that work to maintain divisions, frequently colluding with a hierarchical belief system that has always set people apart on grounds of physicality.

The urge to transcend such distinctions is clearly alluring to many because it offers a means of eliding such difficulties, yet Stone warns that 'forgetting about the body is an old Cartesian trick, one that has unpleasant consequence for those bodies whose speech is silenced by the act of our forgetting; that is to say those upon whose labour the act of forgetting the body is founded – usually women and minorities'.[64] While such a statement appears well-intentioned, it assumes that women and 'minorities' comprise a homogenous group, as well as seeming to insist that they must always be defined by the physical. Is the body really the source of their difference, or simply the means by which racial and sexual prejudice have been secured and legitimated? The problem of any attempt to discuss physical differences is the likelihood of falling into the same biologically reductive traps and it is seemingly in order to avoid such consequences that Stone interestingly takes a U-turn in her next statement, suggesting that forgetting the body could, in fact, be 'a powerful strategy' because 'through forgetting, that which is already built becomes that which can be discovered'.[65] In other words, it suggests moving beyond the taken-for-granted assumptions of our present cultural constructions, recognising them for what they are, and focusing on creating a genuinely inclusive future that chooses not to recognise skin colour or sexual organs to be of any great importance in differentiating between people. A divided history and continuing inequalities only seem likely to be perpetuated into a divided future unless strategies of affiliation, coalition and mutual resistance are articulated, and perhaps some degree of forgetting is necessary for this to occur.

David Burner has argued that the growth of gender and racial discourses have detracted from class issues in the latter part of the twentieth century, despite this allegedly being the one category that could unite all these groups.[66] This contention, although questionable in its assumption that economic division is the fundamental form of oppression facing all groups today, nevertheless makes the important point that, without some unifying element, society's ruptures are only likely to be exacerbated. It remains uncertain however, whether the cyborg is equal to the task of consolidating difference, just as faith in technology's capacity for transcendence appears all too simplistic.

Ultimately, cyberspace and VR technologies are a diversion from the real issues that serve to divide and subject people. No amount of rhetoric generated by its theoretical possibilities will change the fact that VR is merely a hi-tech game zone, or that the world behind the computer screen is still only accessible to a relative minority. What remains needed is for theorists to dispense with categories and simplistic assertions that simply perpetuate divisions and engage instead in finding a sufficient degree of commonality with which to unite different groups. The question to be asked is how are such affiliations to be formed without upholding oppositions?

We need to examine the interface at which machines and humanity have undergone a mutual evolution, as stated by Mazlish, in order to evaluate a new mode of subjectivity that obliterates such dualisms. Telotte conceives the cyborg as a master text for reconceiving the self in the postmodern age, arguing that it forms a convenient metaphor by which to make sense of the cultural constructions of race, class and gender.[67] Yet even if these distinctions are mere constructions, they have an impact on lived realities and experiences that can surely not be abandoned easily. As Chris Hables Gray *et al*. point out:

> It may be that cyborgs will be neither male nor female, neither with nor without color in the far future, or some complicated version of these, but how we are affected by cyborg technology now still depends a great deal on what gender, race and class we are.[68]

Thomas Foster states that: 'To be a cyborg means accepting a postmodern condition of inhabiting a body that functions as a signifying surface, where the social construction of all subjectivities becomes legible.'[69] Yet Foster remains hesitant about the consequences of such signification, asking: 'What happens to the specificity of non-white, non-masculine subjects and their histories? That specificity may be both produced and evaded under the sign of the cyborg.'[70] The problem perceived is a familiar one, reworking the notion of 'e-race-sure' coined by Jennifer Gonzalez, which similarly suspects that cyborg identity may be used to undermine the seemingly imperative distinctions of race and gender. Why the 'specificity' of women and 'non-whites' is necessarily evaded or forgotten in cyborg rhetoric seems both speculative and fatalistic however, particularly given its potential ability to breach established boundaries, to reflect a multiplicity of experiences and also to suggest a vital sense of commonality.

In fact, the aforementioned detractions aside, it is Gonzalez who provides, in my view, the most useful definition of cyborg identity in her formulation that: 'One can consider any body a cyborg body that is both its own agent and subject to the power of other agencies.'[71] The merits of such a delineation lie in its potential inclusivity, for 'any body' implies that everybody – irrespective of physiological distinction – is capable of acting as much as being acted upon. Recognising oneself as both agent and subject is a crucial formulation, one that is more accurate and positive than other interpretations of cyborghood because it recognises that we have individuality and volition and are therefore not simply victims of an indefinable and indomitable power. We may not have total control over our lives and thoughts, but neither are we controlled entirely by specific agencies and practices. The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between each polarity, waiting to be negotiated and revealed. Technology is both liberating and oppressive, just as every human being has the capacity towards resistance or resignation, and it is in recognising this joint potential that the cyborg offers a new means of orientation.

Gonzalez points out that during industrialisation people's relationship to machines would determine gender and class relations, stating that: 'Those who had access to certain machines were privileged, those who were expected to behave like certain machines were subjugated. The same is true today.'[72] Today however, a more complex phenomenon has occurred than simply having access to machines. People have begun to define themselves by the machines they own – such as their car, their mobile phone or their personal computer – and cinema itself can be seen as a machine that partially helps to define our sense of self. Certain films may even arouse what Gonzalez terms as 'cyborg consciousness' – a means of understanding how specific agencies work upon the subject.[73] As Telotte has suggested, this has the capacity to inspire an 'awareness of and attention to our own level of artifice, of constructedness, of how we often seem controlled by a kind of program not so different from the sort that drives the artificial beings which abound in our films'.[74]

Cyborg narratives thus continue the work of older philosophical concerns in questioning the degree to which we may be considered machine-like, bringing with them the possibility of creating new modes of awareness in audiences. Like the automata of previous centuries, they provoke a range of questions, eliciting fear as much as fascination regarding human nature and our relationship to the world. Through encouraging 'cyborg consciousness' these texts may even influence a political understanding of social relations, which may be seen as the contemporary equivalent of class consciousness when placed within an economic context, reminding us of the dehumanising consequences of Capitalism, suggesting it to be a corrupt and avaricious power, and thus forming a critique that is itself in danger of being all too easily forgotten. It is to these narratives, and the political connotations of the cyborg as worker, that the next chapter turns.

3
Food for Moloch: The Cyborg as Worker

Of all the metaphorical readings that can be applied to the cyborg, its political implications as a symbolic worker have been largely ignored. This chapter aims to redress this omission and is concerned with how the cyborg can be read as an industrially produced subject who is struggling to establish a coherent identity while labouring to respond to the changing needs of Capitalism. The cinematic cyborg lends itself to this reading for a number of reasons: because the notion of 'implants' can be viewed on a par with the ideological processes that reinforce specific values as normative, with the grid-screen that this figure typically sees through symbolising the structured perception derived from having been 'programmed' or conditioned with a given set of beliefs and behavioural codes; and because its economic positioning as a worker sums up the alienation, exploitation and dehumanisation that are implicitly associated with feelings commonly experienced by those on the lower end of the social strata.

The cyborg film is accordingly seen to offer a critique of Capitalism in its depiction of degraded human relations, yet one that coexists with its status as an entertainment product, created by corporations in the pursuit of profit, and consumed by audiences for any number of differing reasons. It is, in other words, staked from a position of compromise and contradiction which, as we shall see, is only too pertinent to the subject under discussion.

A class-based understanding of identity, and its concomitant relationship with a Marxist interpretation of economic division, is an increasingly neglected issue within contemporary criticism, and an additional aim of this chapter is to evaluate why this has occurred and what its ramifications might be in attempting to fully understand the formation of subjectivity within advanced industrial nations. An accompanying concern is the degree to which, even where residues of Marxist rhetoric are in evidence, the notion of resistance has become transmuted in contemporary cultural debate into an intellectual endeavour. For example, as was discussed in the previous chapter, Chela Sandoval's proposed 'methodology of the oppressed'[1] reveals an increasingly depoliticised notion of what opposition actually entails, with deconstruction itself claimed as a radical act. Such an assertion has become increasingly common within cultural theory, exemplifying the negative tendency, as Sally R. Munt has put it, to see power as

purely semiotic.[2] The result is that a Marxist notion of power, based as it is on economic division and the corresponding notion of class-based oppression and potential opposition, has been gradually subsumed by an emphasis on other matters within academia.

A declining interest in class issues first became apparent in the 1970s as conflicting concerns of race, gender and sexuality divided the Left, discrediting the avowed unity claimed by Marxist polemic. As Munt has argued, the consequent shift of focus in identity politics, coupled with the influence of the American liberal-pluralist approach to cultural studies which, as she puts it 'is more attuned to resistance than repression and (paradoxically) to consumption than production',[3] now manifests itself in identifying the working class merely as audiences whose most radical achievement is that of potentially reading 'against the grain' of media texts. Theoretical interest in class issues thus tends to be limited to an assessment of workers as consumers – even if they are additionally celebrated as producers of meaning – signalling a clearly perceived limit in political expectations, both within the academy and without.

Munt suggests that class analysis is no longer popular because the realities of structural inequalities operating within society are now held to be intransigent. In other words, there is nothing new to be said.[4] Neither, for that matter, does there seem to be anything to be done about these inequalities. The demise of trade union activity and moderation in party politics has served to cast doubt on the efficacy of the labour movement in achieving change within Capitalism, while the wider goals of Communism as a whole have become further discredited. The distortion of Marxist ideals exemplified by Stalin's regime and Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge severely tarnished any promise such rhetoric once had, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc nations has merely proven to the West that even Socialism was unrealisable. Instead, the idea of free enterprise within a relatively benign Capitalist state has become the closest thing we now have to an achievable 'democracy'. Put simply, the revolution failed to happen, and where it did the results were anything but the utopian promises ushered forth by politicians and philosophers.

Certain oppositional ideas remain apparent however, in popular cultural forms such as contemporary SF cinema, and it is interesting to note how they are utilised within such narratives. The cyborg film is of particular interest because it tends to be set within an intrinsically hierarchical social system; satirically commenting on the degrading conditions faced by workers within such a system; usefully demonstrating how concepts such as 'programming' and 'input' reflect the ideological implications of enforced consensus; and using cyborg protagonists to encapsulate the numerous problems of attempting to define class position today. Most interestingly of all, the cyborg film remains one of the few arenas in which such directly political ideas are raised, and within which revolution is sometimes, if admittedly not often, shown to happen. Yet if it articulates class problems it also mediates them. Indeed, how such events are contextualised and presented indicates the extent to which potentially radical ideas can become clichéd and contained by generic convention, as this chapter will demonstrate.

Metropolis (Lang, 1926) provides an exemplary text by which to gauge how ideas of social stratification and economic exploitation are raised and subsequently allayed within the cyborg film. It also highlights the problems of attempting to attribute any single meaning to a cinematic text because of the cultural conditions in which each is produced, and the ever more disparate ways in which they have later come to be assessed. The films that have revised *Metropolis*' theme of strained industrial relations and class polarisation include *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall* (Verhoeven, 1990) and the *RoboCop* trilogy, and while each has questioned Capitalistic values they have also sublimated and ultimately evaded the issues addressed. What results is a primary ambivalence within such texts that merely exacerbates the difficulty of ascribing either right- or left-wing agendas. As we shall see, the metaphor of the cyborg as an alienated worker is far from simply delineated and, despite having the potential to raise radical concerns, the films that do so are equally liable to contain and perhaps even trivialise these ideas in the process.

The concept of dehumanised workers who are bereft of rights is far from new, either within fiction or social reality itself. Aristotle referred to slaves as 'living tools' yet the treatment of humans as machines is a concept that is more specifically aligned with the industrial revolution and its effect upon labourers working within newly urbanised communities. Nineteenth-century social commentator, Thomas Carlyle, dubbed this era 'the machine age' and lamented the human impact of industrialisation by stating that 'men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as hand'.[5]

Karl Marx was notably influenced by such rhetoric when co-writing the *Communist Manifesto* with Freidrich Engels and also derided the transformation of workers into what he termed as 'an appendage of the machine'.[6] The concerns expressed were that mechanisation under Capitalism negatively affected workers by removing them from both the product of their labour and from one another – a phenomenon Marx termed as alienation. Through being endlessly consigned to repetitive tasks, workers were, it was argued, effectively drained of their humanity and made machine-like, devoid of autonomy or agency. As the twentieth century dawned, these anxieties would be aptly symbolised within SF by the figure of the robot.

Czech playwright and novelist, Karel Capek, originated the word 'robot' in his play, *Rossum's Universal Robots* (1921), deriving the term from the Czech word 'robota' – meaning enforced labour. The robot metaphor therefore had clear polemical connotations from the start, which merely intensified when extrapolated by Capek into a scenario involving the creation and exploitation of a group who finally lead a bloody revolt against their masters. However, the play has been diversely interpreted as a satire against both Capitalism and Communism, and Capek himself remained ambivalent about its meaning, claiming that all the protagonists have a separate political agenda and importantly asserting that 'all of them are right'.[7]

In displaying such ambivalence, as well as in its thematic concerns, *RUR* can be seen as a primary cyborg text. In fact, although the term robot has since been

used to imply a non-anthropomorphic machine, its humanoid workers are clearly more cyborg in nature, having been organically created in what could be construed as an early example of genetic engineering. Rossum Snr (whose name means 'reason') creates the first robot as a means of disproving the existence of God, yet his son, an engineer and industrialist, sees its potential as a cheap and efficient form of labour, and the robot is duly mass-produced. Yet as more robots are made the human birth rate declines, implying that human reproduction is subliminally linked to requirements and ironically suggesting that, while machines can free men from toil, the unforeseen result may be our own obsolescence. Helena Glory (president of the Humanitarian League) has sufficient social conscience to pity these manufactured workers and attempts to liberate them with modifications that will allow them to feel pain and thus resist oppression, yet this is ironically carried out at the cost of her own life and that of the rest of humanity as the robots ultimately rise up and murder everyone indiscriminately. The last surviving human prays for the shadow of humanity to continue and a robot Adam and Eve, exhibiting evidence of love for one another, suggests that this hope will be realised.

In the black humour of *RUR*'s denouement the workers' revolt is shown to be successful, yet there is an indication that they will be no better off under the new regime, as their newly installed robot leader appears to have no more compassion for them than Rossum Jnr. This has led certain critics to claim that the play is about the Bolshevik uprising of 1917,[8] while others have argued that it can equally be seen to epitomise the situation for workers within Capitalism, with Patricia Warrick asserting that 'the robots are most meaningfully seen as a dehumanised proletariat whose enslavement by the bourgeoisie is aided by science and technology'.[9] While Communist implications of the play are clear, such as the Manifesto urging 'robots of the world' to unite in an obvious allusion to Marx's call for unification and revolt, this does not preclude the possibility that Capek was equally satirising both social systems. As Sam Moskowitz has asserted, 'despite his blows against the evils of Capitalism, Capek was anything but a Communist' – with the writer himself stating in 1932 that: 'Communism is out to rule, not to rescue, its great watchword is power, not help.'[10]

The play's political ambivalence would resurface in SF films dealing with the subject of artificial life-forms kept in servitude, yet despite its misgivings about the possibility for successful revolution, *RUR* would remain almost exceptional in providing an ending where the workers are shown to triumph at all. In *Metropolis*, *Westworld* (Crichton, 1973) and *Blade Runner* rebellions are thwarted, the system remains largely unchanged and, although Capitalism is obliquely criticised, no viable alternative is envisaged. Instead, technology mediates the true causes of oppression and machines are all too often destroyed as a means of regaining control. Yet despite such tendencies, cinema's robots, replicants and other artificial humanoids have potent significance nonetheless in simply demonstrating an ability to disobey their programming. As a metaphor of oppressed humanity refusing to be exploited this is a potentially radical message, one that makes an implicit class distinction between mechanical workers and those who effectively

own and control them. Furthermore, by symbolising alienation, oppression and uniformity within mass society, a product bought and sold daily in the Capitalist market place, mechanised slaves clearly invoke concerns that are rarely addressed today, while also asserting the possibility of resistance.

By attempting to exceed the parameters that have defined them, such figures demonstrate consciousness and a refusal to be oppressed, striving to gain a sense of autonomy. Where audiences identify on this level with these protagonists, SF's potential to provide some insight into present socio-economic conditions manifests itself, enabling what Jameson has termed as 'cognitive mapping' in allowing the viewer's world, and their place within it, to be seen in new ways.[11] Capek's play encapsulates this interrogative political function of the genre in asking a vital question, one that had been asked centuries before but which was now given a new context that made it all the more profound: in what ways can we be said to differ from a machine, and, by inference, how individual and free can we truly claim ourselves to be? The question would have increasingly disturbing ramifications as the twentieth century progressed, and *RUR*'s implicit albeit ambiguous critique of industrialisation would be remarkably transferred to the screen in SF's first definitive epic, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

Based on a novel by Thea von Harbou, and say instead Co-written by Lang and then wife, Thea von Harbou, *Metropolis* shares many of *RUR*'s themes. Perhaps most obviously, each narrative focuses on a divided society in which one group oppresses another, yet the results are markedly different, for while violent revolution creates possibilities for a new social system in Capek's play, *Metropolis* underscores the futility of revolt. Although made of flesh and naturally conceived, the film's workers are as equally born to serve as *RUR*'s robots yet crucially lack their capacity for organisation. Automaton-like in their subservience, they exhibit little in the way of free will or self-determination, and even their attempted revolt is not the product of a newly acquired consciousness but behaviour manipulated by their masters, without whom the masses would clearly be lost. In short, while *RUR* concludes with a global revolution for its oppressed workers, *Metropolis* decisively eliminates such a possibility.

The Master of Metropolis, Jon Fredersen (Alfred Abel), is an arch industrialist who discovers evidence of insurrection among his workforce and commissions henchman Rotwang (Rudolf Klein-Rogge) to replace them with robots. In creating artificial life, Rotwang possesses elements of *RUR*'s Rossum Snr (as well as Dr Frankenstein, of course) and the result is similarly shown to be an act of blasphemy destined to be punished. Fredersen is more closely aligned with Rossum Jnr, intent on profit alone until love for his son, Freder (Gustav Frolich), magically redeems him. The saintly Maria (Brigitte Helm) is as well intentioned as Helena in seeking social reforms, yet her mechanical double succeeds in inciting the rebellion she herself had struggled to avoid, placing the onus on Freder to elicit change.

Tragedy is only narrowly avoided when the workers destroy the city's machines at the robot's behest, inadvertently flooding their underground dwelling and almost drowning their children in the process. Fortunately, a newly socially conscious Freder helps to save them, thereby proving his compassion while additionally

securing his future role as mediator. Order is restored with the destruction of the robot Maria at the hands of the angry mob, and with Rotwang's death precluding the creation of a new robot workforce. Conciliation between workers and rulers is signalled by a handshake between foreman Grot (Heinrich George) and Freder, with industrial reform suggested in Fredersen's acknowledgement that 'the heart must mediate between the head and the hand'. Despite such mollification however, the class divide portrayed in the film looks set to continue much as it had before, with any thought of revolt having been firmly quashed, and with Fredersen managing to survive the fracas with his reputation unsullied and his involvement unknown.

Clearly, *Metropolis* is an ambiguous text that defies easy assessment. The characterisation is simple, as befits most films of the silent era, yet its possible readings are complex and the villain of the piece shifts according to the version seen and the differing meanings attached to it. Critical interpretation of the film has tended to view it as a reflection of dominant values in Weimar Germany, with Roger Dadoun arguing that 'no film is unaffected by the material and ideological conditions under which it is produced. This is especially true of *Metropolis*.'[12] Dadoun regards the amalgamated industries that funded the film's studio, UFA, to be especially significant, pointing out that its president, Alfred Hugenberg, was also leader of the extreme right-wing 'steel helmets' group and financial contributor to the Nazi party.

As Dadoun perceives it, 'the firm's mission was to produce films that would distract attention from reality and in various ways cast doubt on the prospects for revolution'.[13] These aims are ideologically inscribed within the narrative itself, with the workers figured at one point as a mass audience, mesmerised by Maria on stage, telling them stories to help them forget their troubles.[14] However, it is too simplistic to read the film simply as a piece of Fascist propaganda and, indeed, it is equally possible to read *Metropolis* as anti-Fascist; with the good Maria's replacement by an evil double symbolising Europe being subsumed by Fascism. The fact that Lang was himself Jewish and put Fascist propaganda in the mouths of his villains in *The Testament of Dr Mabuse* (1933) shows that he was only too capable of criticising the prevailing culture rather than merely reflecting it – although it would also be naïve to argue that he had total control over his films. Indeed, the conflicting pressures at work in the ideological structuring of *Metropolis* serve as a potent reminder that meaning is not only created by writers and directors, but shaped by cultural and economic circumstances, as well as being actively interpreted by audiences and critics alike. Nonetheless, much can be made of Lang's own statement that all his films are motivated by 'the desire to keep an individual an individual'.[15]

Metropolis is ultimately a mixed message that asks us to feel pity for its labourers while inviting awe at the city their labour has helped to create, its odd denouement aiming to reconcile glaring inequalities of opportunity with a mere handshake. Chief among the traits shared by subsequent SF cinema is what Telotte has termed as 'double vision' – a trait he describes as 'a tendency to accept but also draw back from the alluring technological imagery that empowers the science

fiction film'.[16] This is clearly epitomised in *Metropolis*'s contradictory narrative: with technology presented as both monstrous to mankind (the nightmare image of the machine-god Moloch taking human sacrifice) and also essential to existence (it is machines, after all, that prevent the worker's city from flooding). As Telotte puts it: 'in its cross thrusts and double voice it talks eloquently about the lures of artifice, about how technological power works on us, and about the way science fiction film, even in its earliest days, could wield its influence over audiences'.[17] Telotte conceives *Metropolis*'s robot, in particular, as representing the seductive power of special effects in being both alluring and treacherous, with a visual splendour that effectively subverts the film's own revolutionary imperative. However, if the robot Maria is symbolic of the essentially cathartic purpose of SF cinema, a means of venting collective frustrations onto a convenient scapegoat, then she also symbolises the most radical aspects of the genre in criticising both what Capitalism intends to make of its workers and the patriarchal pursuit of ideal femininity. Nevertheless, her destruction succeeds in diverting attention from the problems of societal divisions themselves, while paternal love redeems Fredersen's ruthless intentions and romantic love between his son and Maria unites the opposing factions of the dispute in a smoke-screen of sentimentality.

What began as a SF film with latent political concerns thus ends as a family melodrama, a factor which led Luis Bunuel to memorably describe it as 'two films glued together by their bellies'.[18] Despite its numerous flaws however, indeed in some ways because of them, *Metropolis* remains a seminal cyborg text for a number of reasons:

- It is ambivalent – capable of being read in a number of different, and often conflicting, ways.
- It plays on verisimilitude, revising an interest in the doppelganger common in German Expressionist films of the time and which would become a chief concern of later cyborg narratives, with machines portrayed as indistinguishable among us.
- It portrays a society in which a symbiotic relationship between humanity and technology is symbolised by the workers' literal dependence on machines for their survival, with the city designed to ensure social control.
- It reveals clear power divisions, manifested by the polarised class system that operates in its narrative and which is seemingly perpetuated into its imagined future.
- It draws attention to the nature of its own artifice through the landmark use of special effects employed in creating both the city and the robot itself.
- It utilises family relations and heterosexual romance as a melodramatic means to create false resolutions and to divert attention from the actual causes of inequality.
- It individualises and simplifies problems, targeting single characters rather than the system as a whole, and reducing solutions to the small-scale and banal.

- It punishes female gender transgression in the blame placed on the robot Maria, setting a trend in which subsequent female cyborgs who are similarly perceived as threatening to the social order are also destroyed.
- It neutralises the possibilities for revolt by proving it to be futile, self-defeating and unnecessary.

All these traits would resurface in later cyborg narratives, with films such as *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop* updating these concerns within a more contemporary and recognisable milieu. Yet although the imagination and scale of Lang's high-tech city remain a benchmark in terms of visual design, the film's portrayal of industrial conditions seems oddly anachronistic. The cogs and wheels and dials that punctuate daily existence and the uniformity of the workers are clearly a symbolic evocation of the dehumanising impact of monotonous labour, serving as an important reminder that it is human toil that lies beneath the gleaming surface of the city. This fact is all too easy to forget today, particularly as service industries have superseded much factory work, with the majority of manufacturing having been shifted to other nations, yet the conditions faced by the film's workers, far from describing any conceived future, or even the realities of the present in the West, appear instead to be more descriptive of the past.

Much of the film's imagery recalls an earlier stage of industrialisation. The immense clock whose hands a worker struggles to hold back says much about the routinisation of labour that took place during the industrial revolution in which time was measured in minutes, artificial light lengthened each day, and workers adjusted themselves to a newly regulated social system. After finishing a gruelling ten-hour shift the workers in the film seemingly have no time of their own, presumably too exhausted to do anything more than sleep in preparation for another seemingly endless day. Lang thus provides us with a supposed future without unions or any notion of employment rights, one that seems to be firmly rooted in the past and is specifically reminiscent of the nineteenth century, when workers' lives were spent similarly tending machines and toiling in artificial conditions.

As such, the film may be seen to reflect a traditional Marxist interpretation of class conflict that is now simply outmoded. John Lechte has claimed that Marxism's greatest problem is that it is 'a nineteenth-century worldview inspired by industrialisation' – suggesting that it is therefore no longer applicable to present conditions.[19] Clearly, this is an erroneous idea as the private ownership of wealth and structural inequalities remain all too real, as do oppressive conditions, yet equally there have been important socio-economic changes over the last century that require consideration. Advanced industrial nations have seen a steady rise in the growth of the middle class, what Marx referred to as the petit-bourgeoisie, rendering the notion of an essentially antagonistic twofold class system problematic. The development of multinational corporate empires also adds greater complexity to issues of ownership, while the emergence of profit-share schemes in the workplace operate on the principle at least that surplus value is equally available to all. Put simply, exploitation is not as easily determined as it once was and expectations have adjusted to fit modern working conditions. Any sense of opposition is

impacted by a general disenchantment with alternative economic systems that are seen as unworkable, unprofitable, or inevitably corrupt, and with an increasingly refined view of subjectivity that relies on more than economic position as its defining co-ordinates, the Marxist tenets of class consciousness appear to have become distinctly unmoored. In addition, what Roger Bromley refers to as 'post manufacturing Capitalism'[20] in the West has resulted in the rise of white-collar workers replacing previous blue-collar positions and thereby obscuring the stark differences so apparent in the polarisation discussed by Marx, and portrayed so vividly in *Metropolis*.

It is partly due to such changes that critics such as Lechte have argued that Marxism is no longer relevant to contemporary society. Joanne Lacey puts the situation tellingly by stating that 'the quandary for cultural studies in a post-industrial context has been: "without Marxism how do we do class?"'[21] The statement begs two immediate questions: First, can we really be said to now exist within a 'post-industrial context'? After all, despite the continued existence of an underclass, the majority of people still work and if the nature of their labour has changed the true relations of power have not. Secondly, and perhaps more crucially, what has resulted from abandoning Marxism? What, in other words, does a post-Marxist position offer in its place? The simple answer would be to suggest that cynicism has taken root as the definitive tendency in contemporary culture, one that fails to see any alternative to the status quo. As Andrew Calcutt has put it, 'the exhaustion of class conflict means that there is no pressure to interrogate events from a theoretical standpoint, or to formulate an ideologically coherent position upon them . . . so it is that we live in a society which, for all its feverish activity, remains essentially stagnant'.[22]

David Burner has suggested that competing identity politics have deviated from the seemingly self-evident 'truth' that class is the ultimate means of enabling a better future, arguing that 'it is a mark of recent ideology that in the triad race-class-gender, the smallest attention goes to class: the one category among them that describes a diversity of disempowered people and suggests a way to the widest serial equality'.[23] Although laudable in its conviction, Burner's contention seems too simple a solution, with oppression now understood to be more than economic in basis and united interests being hard to establish among the range of ideologies that have emerged in recent years, each offering conflicting interpretations of how power is understood, on whose behalf it operates, and how it is to be opposed. Even knowing how to define one class from another has become a precarious matter today, with Marx's original formulation becoming obscured by the differing criteria used to establish social class and a resulting uncertainty about whether it should be based on educational attainment, earnings, profession, family history, or even the products we consume. Perhaps Lacey's statement should be modified to suggest that there is no need to 'do' class at all any more because we have an insufficient understanding of what it now means and to whom it applies.

The cyborg is an apt metaphor in a time when such ruptures seem particularly entrenched, with competing discourses both revealing and exacerbating the fragmented nature of contemporary subjectivity, yet whether this figure is equipped

to overcome these differences is another matter. Calcutt suggests that in recognising our 'common humanity' on rational grounds, as opposed to the factionalising consequences of subjective analysis, some measure of unity might be achieved.[24] However, while acknowledging a fundamental commonality is clearly important to recognising that everyone has equal rights, the two do not necessarily follow one another automatically. In fact, the cyborg film has predominantly used this notion of an immanent humanity to divert attention from economic division, placing a greater stress on humanising alienated subjects than changing the conditions that have dehumanised them in the first place. By attempting to extol an underlying point of unity between people, the cyborg film has the capacity to generate affiliations between groups, yet it utilises romantic and familial denouements at the expense of generating a political understanding, thereby providing a false sense of closure as heterosexual coupling and the strengthening of family ties deflect from the possibility of achieving solidarity between workers themselves.

The first step towards a Marxist notion of class consciousness stems from forming a political evaluation of the social system, discerning on whose behalf it operates, and making an assessment of one's place within it. By further developing an understanding of how exploitation is both legitimated and reproduced on a societal level, as much as an individual one, comes the potential to forge alliances with others based on shared social position and mutual aims. Such an appraisal is far from straightforward however, and mitigated by conflicting factors that divert attention, and potential disgruntlement, elsewhere. The cyborg film demonstrates how such strategies work to defuse insurrection, for while *RUR*'s robots find sufficient provocation, once equipped with feelings, to retaliate against their masters, it is only Freder in *Metropolis* who acquires the social conscience necessary to demand change, having learnt about the true relations of capital from Maria. However, he settles on reform rather than revolt, his class-consciousness stemming from a position of privilege that he ultimately manages to retain, while the workers themselves remain ignorant brutes who prove that they require the leadership of their masters to think on their behalf. Interestingly, Georgi (Erwin Biswanger) – the worker Freder exchanges places with to see how the other half live – is diverted by the bright lights of Yoshiwara's nightclub as soon as he is above ground, reminding us of the tendency to opt for more immediately realisable goals and satisfactions than the long-term and uncertain aims of revolution. Although easily incited towards violence, the only level of consciousness the workers ultimately achieve is a dim realisation that they have been deceived, while the true cause of their oppression remains unclear.

Effective resistance depends on both mentally processing and vocalising the true relations of power, followed by the ability to collaborate and act upon such knowledge – an all-too-rare feat within cinematic examples. The workers of *Metropolis* seem incapable of this, just as *Westworld*'s androids provide the illusion of revolt while failing to acknowledge any mutual cause or kinship, and thus to indicate a sufficient degree of 'consciousness' to be called political. By contrast, *Blade Runner*'s replicants are capable not only of perceiving their situation and

joining forces, but of staging resistance also, and are worth evaluating in depth for this very reason.

The film takes place within a more advanced stage of Capitalism to that portrayed in *Metropolis*. The future of *Blade Runner*'s projected LA 2019 is one of disenfranchised masses left behind on a defunct and polluted Earth. As John Brosnan eloquently describes it, the film's opening shot is 'like an aerial view of hell after the property developers have moved in'.[25] Those who can afford to have left the planet altogether, ascending to an 'off-world' colony elsewhere. In *Metropolis* it was never made clear what the workers and machines actually produced. In *Blade Runner* the chief form of industry appears to be the manufacture and sale of artificial people and animals. Replicant slaves are used to encourage off-world emigration; to be used, as an advertising spinner puts it, 'as you see fit'. It is these ersatz animals and people that those remaining on Earth are left to trade on: to purchase, produce, or pursue.

Dr Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel) is equivalent to both Rossum Jnr and Jon Fredersen in aiming to create perfect workers, heading a corporation which is rigidly divided both in terms of employees and the artificial workers they manufacture. Specialists involved in design such as Chew (James Hong) and J.F. Sebastian (William Sanderson) work alone. Unlike the uniform mass of *Metropolis*, the lumpen proletariat moving and thinking as one, these workers are singular, cut off from one another and the product of their labour, until its illicit return in the shape of the Nexus 6 replicants – the most sophisticated cyborgs yet produced, who, despite being banished from Earth, manage to return and confront their creators.[26]

A special task force operates to prevent such an occurrence, with personnel termed as 'blade runners' having been trained to eliminate renegade replicants illegally found on Earth. The film's class structure is thus shown to be more complex than *Metropolis*' twofold system – as is demonstrated by the shifting position of one such officer, Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford). Deckard begins the film as an unemployed member of the city's underclass,[27] yet he is swiftly re-recruited back into the employ of the city police force to work as a blade runner when a group of replicants are found to be at large somewhere in the city. Although initially reluctant to take the job it is the warning made by police Captain Bryant (M. Emmet Walsh) that he is 'either cop or little people' which convinces Deckard that such a dilemma is effectively 'no choice'. Through thus articulating the stake held by some in putting self-interest before conscience, and thereby helping to maintain oppressive conditions, the film's political overtones clearly make themselves felt.

A distinct hierarchy is revealed in the social spaces which different classes occupy, with those working for Tyrell having a certain privilege over the alienated crowds milling the streets with nowhere to go – the 'little people' Deckard is so afraid of becoming. The pyramid shape of the Tyrell corporation building reflects the sharply tiered social structure of this world. Beneath the street-level crowds, figuratively speaking, denied even the right to exist on earth, are the replicants – manufactured workers who have staged a bloody rebellion in space in protest at their servitude and the limited lifespan given to them.

Unlike the organic but scarcely human workers of *Metropolis*, who cannot live without their machines, the patently human replicants of *Blade Runner* cannot live at all beyond their allotted four years. 'Retirement' is the term used to track and kill these synthetic humans – a word that is conventionally used to describe the period following a lifetime of work when a person is no longer considered productive. From the opening exposition explaining this scenario we are invited to feel sympathy for their plight, perhaps even some measure of kinship with them. Their attempt to extend their longevity is an all-too-human emotion after all, and in many ways these fugitive replicants even surpass their human counterparts by exhibiting greater capacity for community and empathy. Indeed, this central irony is intrinsic to the film, effectively undermining the relatively privileged status of those termed as human.

Deckard is an unsympathetic 'hero' in this regard and although *Blade Runner* makes a clumsy attempt to redeem him via a romantic sub-plot, this appears to serve much the same function as the relationship between Freder and Maria in *Metropolis*, attempting to detract from economic considerations by showing that love conquers all. In outlawing himself in order to save the replicant Rachael (Sean Young), Deckard ultimately finds the strength to quit the job he hated, yet his apparent love for 'her' is also intended to transcend the circumstances of her construction and somehow excuse the role he has played in eliminating other replicants. Above all, just as industrial relations remain unchanged by the end of *Metropolis*, this is equally true of *Blade Runner*, which similarly condemns class exploitation only for heterosexual romance to occlude the political ideas raised.

Although Deckard and Rachael's relationship symbolises a seemingly progressive alliance, they succeed only in preserving the status quo through helping to destroy the replicants' bid for freedom. Yet the latter group's failure to secure 'more life' and their subsequent annihilation seems designed to provoke a sense of injustice and unease, rather than relief at order having been restored, and the film's greatest achievement may thus be the degree to which audiences might potentially identify with these characters and their circumstances.

However, while undoubtedly inspiring in terms of their efforts to resist oppression, there are clear limits in the replicants' ability to do so. Most interesting, particularly with regard to issues of exploitation and individual freedom, is the degree to which they succeed in breaking free from their programming, as each continues to perform essentially the same role on Earth for which they were designed. Leon (Brion James) with the grade 'C' mentality has a job in waste disposal; Pris (Daryl Hannah), the 'pleasure model', still relies on her physical charms to enlist J.F. Sebastian's help and worries about her looks; Roy (Rutger Hauer), programmed for combat and 'colonisation' (and equipped with the highest intelligence) is the group's natural leader, who co-ordinates operations and concerns himself with loftier issues; while Zhora (Joanna Cassidy), the trained assassin, performs an act with a snake in a seedy nightclub for no clearly discernible purpose whatsoever.[28]

What is revealed by Zhora's act however, and the resigned attitude she has to, what she does, is both an acknowledgement of gender difference within the labour force and an extended understanding of the term 'exploitation' to that considered

within traditional Marxism. *Blade Runner* thus expands the stereotypical image of the working class from the male manually occupied proletariat depicted in *Metropolis* to include different forms of work and oppression. Nonetheless, Zhora aside, each replicant plays out a role that is not so different from what they were programmed to do, which could be interpreted as a cynical statement regarding our own capacity for autonomy and individuality. Revealing an absurdly naïve view of the film, David Desser asserts that 'the replicants feel safest among the denizens of the streets, adopting working-class lifestyles',[29] falsely assuming that they have some level of choice in what they do, or that they are safe in a city where blade runners are at liberty to shoot into crowds with impunity.

How economic power is visually presented in both *Metropolis* and *Blade Runner* has attracted equally contentious readings, with a number of critics asserting that spectacular imagery is frequently shown at the expense of political questioning. Telotte claims, for example, that in Freder's journey underground and his attempt to better understand the city's workings, Lang deliberately foregrounds 'an elaborate display of technology that promises human satisfaction while it carefully cloaks the secrets of its operation, the source of its power'.[30] In other words, the film's focus on the visual deflects inquiry elsewhere, beyond its hidden depths, and while Freder may see sights never experienced before, this does not necessarily imply that he will become a more benevolent ruler. Yves Chevrier makes a similar criticism of *Blade Runner*, arguing that we can reproach what he terms as 'this voyeuristic film, which shows all, for not having shown us anything of politics'.[31] However, Judith B. Kerman has countered such a claim by asserting that visual devices, such as the Esper machine in Deckard's apartment, are in themselves 'stunning as a commentary on privileged sight as an aspect of power'.[32]

The 'privileged' glimpses of the city and its inhabitants, made possible through Deckard's status as blade runner and the technological gadgetry at his disposal, allow him access to areas that are denied to the 'little people' yet the film also reveals his own tenuous identity. Much has been made of the speculation that Deckard might himself be a replicant and he behaves in many ways like an archetypal dehumanised worker: afraid to lose his status as a cop – which his boss capitalises on; expressing no personal preference when asked by Rachael if he minds her smoking during the Voight-Kampff test – replying only that 'it won't affect the test'; and subsequently declining to help her by accessing Tyrell's files – the point at which she is moved to ask if he has ever taken the test himself. Indeed, if he is a replicant, and many clues in the film lead to such a conclusion, then he clearly exhibits false consciousness in working against his own kind.

Even the decision to finally quit the force is motivated by self-interest rather than conscience. In opting to go on the run with Rachael, Deckard makes a choice where previously he felt he had none yet looks out only for himself and his lover, while the possibility of further replicants being produced is neatly evaded. Tyrell may be dead, thanks to Roy Batty, along with his chief geneticist and eye designer, yet the conditions that dehumanise prevail, just as they do in *Metropolis*, with *Blade Runner* similarly providing only a mediated, unsatisfying conclusion, whichever version is shown. Although David Desser has called it 'the finest

achievement in the political science fiction film', he problematically assumes that Deckard and Rachael will serve as agents of change when in fact they desire only escape.[33] Neither one displays any real affinity with the workers they have each helped to 'retire', and although their union, like *RUR*'s robot Adam and Eve, seems to vainly suggest a new beginning, the chances of political change are severely curtailed.

A chief source of interest in *Blade Runner* has been its apparent embodiment of postmodernism, implying as it does that Capitalism is in its final stage, not in the sense that Marx intended, of being replaced by another economic system, but in Jameson's revised sense of 'inverted millenarianism' – which can envisage no alternative to Capitalism whatsoever.[34] J.F. Sebastian's problem of 'accelerated decrepitude' has a symbolic resonance in this respect. Not only has he passed this degenerative disease onto the products of his labour (obliquely referencing the replicants' built-in obsolescence when he states 'there's some of me in you'), but the illness may also be seen to parallel the Marxist belief that Capitalism itself is inherently doomed. After all, industry has virtually consumed both the environment and its inhabitants, leading to seemingly irreparable decline. Tyrell's excuse for being unable to provide the replicants with extended longevity is also illuminating in this respect, describing the result of attempting to alter their DNA as 'a rise of mutant colonies' that would infect the system 'like rats leaving a sinking ship'. The metaphor is indicative of precisely what is happening to humanity in *Blade Runner*'s future, with the replicants cast as the mutant hordes and those already 'off-world' clearly the bourgeois rats leaving behind a doomed planet they have exploited to the hilt. However, the film acquires metaphysical overtones at the expense of its political understanding and suggests that, because these mutant humans are truly 'more human than human', more capable of showing empathy and compassion (as well as resistance) than any actual humans in the film, their manufacture – and therefore Capitalism itself – is oddly redeemed.

The *RoboCop* trilogy provides another important variation on the theme of the cyborg worker, one that extends the ideas discussed in interesting ways. The first film finds the Detroit city police department threatening to strike for better pay and conditions, which inspires the corporation in charge of the city – Omni Consumer Products – to seek an alternative 'future of law enforcement'. A cyborg replacement is conceived, and the company's ruthlessness proven still further by deliberately killing police officer Alex Murphy (Peter Weller) to use as their prototype. In selecting a stereotypical 'good cop' and Irish–Catholic family man OCP appear to want a measure of human morality implanted into their project, as much as his years of experience on the job, yet take exploitation to new levels in deliberately engineering his death. By programming their new cyborg to obey directives, they emulate Fredersen's plans to create a compliant workforce, but find that they have underestimated the human spirit. Murphy's memories are the last fragments of his former identity, a puzzle he must solve in order to discover who he is and trace the city's crime back to its source, which happens to be OCP headquarters.

In its portrayal of corporate ruthlessness the film clearly satirises present socio-economic conditions within advanced Capitalism, yet *RoboCop* also reduces political

problems and an unequal social structure to the personal, specifically targeting one 'bad apple' employee, and not the system itself, as corrupt. Another aspect that links *RoboCop* directly with *Metropolis* is the desperation of OCP's employees and their dependence on work. In *Metropolis*, when former secretary Josephat (Theodor Loos) is dismissed by Fredersen, he attempts to commit suicide, knowing his life is worthless without his position. Even the naïve Freder is aware of the implications of redundancy, stating 'Don't you know what it means to be dismissed by you, Father?' *RoboCop* and its two sequels revise this theme with black humour as OCP employees regularly throw themselves from the corporation building or blow their brains out in the face of unemployment. However, whether such scenes inspire more than caustic humour about the mercenary nature of Capitalism remains debatable. Fictional television commercials and game-shows are used to mock the acquisitive culture that is clearly only a slight exaggeration of the present, yet ambiguity nevertheless abounds, particularly towards the end of the first film, when Murphy/RoboCop reassures his wounded partner by stating: 'Don't worry. They'll fix you. They fix everything.' This acknowledgement of 'their' power is left undefined, as is the ending in which he affirms his former identity of 'Murphy' and thereby seems to accept what has been done to him.

A further problem lies in attempting to give Murphy a class identity, for like Deckard's role in *Blade Runner*, he is both a victim of power and a relatively privileged agent also. Fred Glass asserts that the police function as the working class within *RoboCop*'s narrative,[35] yet such a substitution is problematic, particularly in terms of Marxist theorist Louis Althusser's conception of the police as part of the Repressive State Apparatus that works to maintain order in an unequal society.[36] In showing the police as individuals who are themselves capable of resistance, rather than unquestioning functionaries of the system, a more complex view is presented than Althusser's, yet one that ideologically grants *RoboCop*'s police force questionable heroic status. Julie F. Codell has even labelled them as a democratic workforce who, in contrast to OCP's rigidly hierarchical structure, follow what she terms as a 'familial model' that is open to all and deemed to be emblematic of humanity's best traits.[37]

The film's patent idealisation of the police is clearly a myth however, one that recalls old fashioned police series in which officers of the law are shown to be endearing, incorruptible protectors. Similar myths are deliberately referenced by the film's director, Paul Verhoeven, who has described Murphy's character as 'someone who loses his body and soul and is resurrected. He's a Christ-like figure, an American Christ, who at the end of the movie realises that all he can do is pick up his gun'.[38] The symbolic interchange of 'American Christ' and cowboy makes Murphy not only a 'product' of OCP, but a product of his culture also, like his son's favourite television cop, T.J. Lazer, whose gun-play he imitates. Indeed, this mimicry indicates the extent to which he was already conditioned, prior to OCP's reprogramming, and whether Murphy ultimately acquires consciousness by the end of the film, or simply plays out the clichés of heroic revenge embedded within cowboy movie and cop show narratives, is finally left moot.

With Murphy having avenged his own death and ostensibly cleaned up OCP, *RoboCop* ends on a similar note to the conciliatory handshake that concludes *Metropolis*, attempting to restore an uneasy sense of order in the narrative and thus eliding the political ideas that have hovered at its periphery. A sense of fatalism is very much in evidence and, as with *Blade Runner*, change is deemed necessary only on an individual level, in adjusting to accommodate socio-economic conditions, rather than attempting to alter them.

RoboCop's sequel (Kershner, 1990) was largely a pedestrian exercise that once again found the good cop triumphing over crime (and an evil cyborg adversary) while remaining controlled by OCP, yet *RoboCop 3* (Dekker, 1993) would see Murphy finally resisting orders and becoming outlawed as a result. Two segments of the underclass are presented in the film: street gangs, known as 'Splatterpunks', who are demonised within the narrative as mindless thugs, and the former residents of a district known as Cadillac Heights, who have been made homeless by OCP in order to make way for a new housing development. Murphy upholds the first and second directives of his programming – 'serve the public trust' and 'protect the innocent' – in order to defend this latter group, and eventually leads both the police and these 'legitimate' citizens against the corporation. However, civil unrest is sanctioned not only because the police are literally on their side but also because the fight is turned against the Japanese (the new shareholders of OCP) rather than against Capitalism itself. The result is that an otherwise progressive example of community action and resistance is transformed into a conservative hymn to American nationalism.

The inclusion of a partly oriental girl, Nikko (Remy Ryan), as the child hero of the narrative seems designed to off-set this anti-Japanese sentiment, and just as the inclusion of a black woman, Bertha (CCH Pounder), who initially leads the revolutionary vanguard, serves to provide the illusion of multiculturalism before she is swiftly killed off, so the racial background of this child is used to excuse the racist politics at work in the film. Still more significantly, Nikko's subsequent acquisition of a new family to replace those killed by OCP, including Murphy as her cyborg father, provides a heart-warming conclusion that once again negates the other issues at stake.

RoboCop 3's apparent message is that Capitalism is all right so long as it is American – an idea that severely detracts from the film's otherwise exceptional status in portraying a group-based radical offensive against the state. Other detractions include the film's racial and nationalist undertones, for while Murphy is capable of adopting a bi-racial child and working with his black sergeant to achieve change, no coalition can be envisaged with his Japanese counterpart, Otomo (Bruce Locke) – a cyborg samurai who is clearly defined as the enemy and accordingly destroyed.

What prevents Murphy and Otomo from forming any kind of allegiance is a matter of nationality, with each representing opposing sides in a seemingly entrenched conflict. The idea that artificial or partial humans might represent a particular nationality or ethnic origin is a subject that has attracted a number

of critics, providing another way of interpreting the subject of an exploited or dehumanised group other than class, yet while these readings are often interesting they can also provide somewhat tenuous justification for their arguments. For example, Gerald Mead and Sam Appelbaum interpret the androids in *Westworld* (Crichton, 1973) as racial signifiers, arguing that in being portrayed as 'some kind of less-than-human humans . . . what we have in fact are the beginnings of a rather thinly disguised racial perspective, an exploitation justified by an explanation'.[39] They go on to evaluate the physical difference of the androids' grooved fingers as 'the structural equivalents of "slanted eyes" or "kinky hair" in any racist ideology',[40] thereby asserting that a racist agenda is clearly apparent in the construction of these figures, designed, in their view, to justify the murder of (similarly dehumanised) Vietnamese that was ongoing at the time of the film's release.

While a racial reading of the robot or cyborg is equally as valid as the economic one being made here, there are obvious problems of simply reinforcing stereotypes through such analogies. Robert Barringer has, for example, read *Blade Runner*'s replicants as black, basing this view on the contentious claim that the film is American (and thus automatically aligned with its history of slavery), but also on stereotypes of 'blackness' that its synthetic humans supposedly epitomise, such as excessive sexuality. With scant regard for his own investment in perpetuating regressive distinctions, Barringer argues that 'replicants are the bastards of the white world, their powerful bodies and minds perversely designed to fulfil white fears of/desires for blacks'.[41]

All critics are equally guilty of transposing their own agendas onto the texts they interpret, yet in choosing one definition of exploitation over another, in refusing to recognise that the pleasure and combat models of *Westworld* and *Blade Runner* could equally apply to the working class of *all* colours, the factors behind the current fragmentation of political thinking are amply demonstrated.

Clearly, there are evident problems not only in how we define class societally, but also how we 'read' class issues in cinema, with the socio-economic circumstances that have produced specific films invariably inflecting upon the meanings made of them. The cinematic cyborg's emergence over the last two decades of the twentieth century is notable in this respect, and can be seen to coincide with industrial developments that have occurred over this time. Fred Glass evaluates the cyborg's appearance in SF cinema as a means of understanding economic change and its impact on subjectivity, arguing that what he terms as New Bad Future films 'provide viewers with an unconscious vehicle for dealing with the collective issues raised by the transition, under Capitalist control, from a relatively stable national mechanical/industrial society to a new and uncertain transnational information technology order'.[42] As Glass elaborates: 'The social anxiety of job dislocation through the wanton destruction of the old industrial base of the American economy is compounded by the felt experience of millions of workers who have to retool themselves to survive. The cyborg, part human and part computer, struggling to achieve a meaningful identity, in this context becomes a character with which a sizeable fraction of the audience can identify.'[43]

Although Glass describes this development as relatively new, Alessandro Portelli has argued that robots have been a metaphor of economic anxieties since the Second World War, claiming that they jointly symbolise fear of automation and ethnic minorities, both of which are seen as a threat to jobs.[44] Kevin Pask has updated these concerns in his reading of the *Terminator* films, asserting that they express alarm about multinational Capitalism and specifically 'the replacement of high-paying unionized jobs in North America by low-wage manufacturing work throughout the Third World'.[45] The factory location used to stage the battle between Sarah Connor and the T-800 at the end of the first film is thus held to be significant as it is a site of 'the displacement of once (relatively) privileged American workers by worldwide technological innovation', and Pask contends that a specifically anti-Japanese message underwrites the film.[46] That *Terminator 2* returns to another factory site is deemed to be equally symbolic by Pask who points out that 'this factory is not a high-tech robotics factory but a steel mill, one of the traditional sites of American mass production'[47] and, importantly, the place where the reprogrammed T-800 – supposedly signifying a nostalgic invocation of American industrial 'brawn' – wins out against its enemy.

On a similar note, Codell regards Detroit as an apt environment for *RoboCop*'s dystopian setting because of this city's historical relevance as a site of the nation's former car industry – once a symbol of American prosperity, now superseded by foreign imports.[48] The revamped Murphy's ultimate defeat of his Japanese counterpart in *RoboCop 3* can thus be seen as a fantasy of national economic regeneration made possible through advanced technology.

Doran Larson also reads cyborgs as representing the American body politic but envisages a more progressive image in *Terminator 2*'s T-1000 metamorph, which he interprets as representing 'permanent class upheaval'[49] and, perhaps more succinctly, 'democracy as feared by antidemocrats'.[50] It is, in other words, symbolic of the multicultural Left, a variation on Haraway's vision of cyborg politics as a 'powerful infidel heteroglossia'[51] uniting people of all colours towards Socialism. Yet Larson powerfully articulates how *Terminator 2* undermines any such feelings of affinity by using sentiment to moderate the political potential of the film. As he argues:

> In identifying with Arnold as he battles the LMM [liquid metal man] we assure ourselves that we still wield control by destroying the liquid metal body we have ourselves become. We say that, so long as the recognisable man-machine envies our humanity, we have not sold it away. We say that we can manage all but one of the frightening possibilities that stand before us. All save the recognition that were we ever to reach out and turn off the TV, or leave the mall and movieplex and assemble in the light of day with other workers, citizens and consumers, we might begin to contemplate seriously the power we could wield.[52]

If a sense of desperation is discernible in this rallying cry, it is indicative of the role cultural critics have assigned to popular cinema in educating 'the masses' and the corresponding level of responsibility conferred upon audiences to read these

texts in the 'right' way. A level of paternalism is thus manifested by theorists such as Glass who worries that violent content will detract viewers from the more cerebral ideas contained within New Bad Future films. Glass seems to concern himself with 'young working-class male members of the audience' to the exclusion of others, yet also appears to underestimate their intellectual capacity by asserting that 'if a political message *is* absorbed, it keeps closely to the shadows of their unconscious, where the fears and hopes on which political manipulation thrives tend to stay in our depoliticised culture'.[53] Not only is this conjecture poorly substantiated, but a sense of pessimism is also apparent, one that reflects the very fatalism which Glass condemns such films for; arguing that they work to alleviate cultural anxieties while providing a seemingly unalterable vision of the future as Capitalist and dystopian.

Alternative economic systems are admittedly rare within SF cinema, and even a film such as *Total Recall*, which seems to portray a successful working-class revolt, is framed so that the veracity of its denouement is effectively undermined. The film provides an archetypally alienated and dissatisfied worker in manual labourer, Douglas Quaid (Arnold Schwarzenegger), whose line: 'I feel that I was made for something more than this' is a sentiment of dissatisfaction that most workers have experienced at some point in their lives. However, the film raises the idea of an emerging consciousness only to subvert it entirely. We discover that Quaid's identity and memories are fake (thus making him a cyborg of sorts) and that he is really an agent from Mars trying to infiltrate an underground rebel movement among the workers there. The scenario of life on Mars for these colonists is the reverse of that promised by *Blade Runner*'s 'off-world' advertising blimps. Air itself is now a commodity and cheap domes provided by Cohaagen (Ronny Cox), the corrupt individual in charge, have leaked radiation and caused mutation among the colonists. As Glass puts it:

> The image of deformity that brings the inside of the body erupting out of its skin presents a literal sense of the pressures toward rebellion experienced by an oppressed class or people. Their solidarity with one another is partly based on their shared misfortune; it is also clearly rooted in their political understanding of who has done this to them and why.[54]

This solidarity is undermined somewhat by the film's utilisation of a 'great leader' scenario, initially played by the legendary Kuato (Marshall Bell), who urges the depoliticised Quaid to act, and who is finally replaced by Quaid himself in leading the affront against Cohaagen. Nevertheless, the mutants are far from Telotte's estimation that they 'suggest Third World types in need of the liberating power of the white Superman'[55] for this implies that they are passive dependants who have been unable to mobilise resistance and help for themselves. In fact, the mutant workers have organised so effectively that they have proved to be a serious threat to Cohaagen's empire and although their environment is rigged, like *Metropolis*' city floodgates, to physically suppress any revolt, they have discovered the means to overcome this in the form of a miraculous technology provided by the Martians.

Quaid simply steps in at the last minute, using the information given to him by Kuato to make the environment breathable and thus (hopefully) liberate the colonists from corporate control. Because Quaid has had relatively privileged access to the leaders of both groups he is able to capitalise on his position and literally change the colonists' world, yet this utopian denouement is not genuinely attributable to him alone, but achieved through a collective struggle for change. After all, it is through the worker's underground movement that Quaid becomes politically mobilised in the first place, particularly through his attraction to Melina (Rachel Ticotin), who parallels *Metropolis*'s Maria in terms of developing his social conscience, and thus allowing him to become a better man.

As with *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop*, memory and identity figure strongly in *Total Recall*'s articulation of political awareness. Quaid learns that his entire life consists of a memory implant and that his 'real' self is a sidekick to Cohaagen called Hauser. However he finally selects his false persona in choosing to align himself with the colonist struggle. Being true to himself is not defined by who he used to be, but determined instead by what he now believes and desires, enabling him to reject his original alter ego.

In a reversal of the Marxist concept of false consciousness as self-deceit and collusion with the existing order, Alison Landsberg uses the term 'prosthetic identity' to describe the potential of media technologies in creating a political understanding and affinity with others. Using Deckard and Quaid as her examples she claims that an enlightened mode of awareness is achieved by each figure and suggests that progressive thinking in social reality can also be formed through essentially artificial means, arguing that certain cinematic narratives can help to create 'an ethics of personhood', thus providing audiences with the 'right' ideas for resistance and communality.[56] In Quaid's case, she argues, it is a fake memory that gives him both a political conscience and the courage to act upon it, while *Blade Runner* similarly makes the question of origin and authenticity meaningless.

Like Glass, Landsberg suggests that such films may inspire political identification among the audience, yet there are problems in her assumptions that limit this potential. The 'real' histories of the two characters used as her examples are claimed to be of no consequence because they each learn to act progressively within their false personas, yet just as Deckard's defiance in saving Rachael is ultimately self-gratifying, so Quaid's role in assisting the Martian colonists defeat. The Agency seems to stem more from his own ego empowerment than any genuine identification with their cause. Furthermore, the ease with which Quaid thwarts these villains, saves the planet and gets the girl is uncomfortably close to the secret agent implant he ordered at Rekall Incorporated – a fact he acknowledges at the end of the film when questioning if it is all just a dream.

If this ending confounds audience pleasure at the close of the film, it also renders the class conflict that has structured the narrative to be equally insecure and unreal. The literal deus ex machina in *Total Recall*'s denouement is the miraculous technology enabling blue skies in a Martian landscape – an image that points to the impossibility of what has transpired, utilising cinematic clichés of a happy ending to divert attention from the real issues at stake. Such patent

wish-fulfilment serves to remind us that, despite Landsberg's contention, the real and the illusory must be differentiated for any political understanding to be possible, for to conflate the two is to deny the seriousness of social problems and lived experiences.

Landsberg's claim that history is irrelevant is an additional problem, for surely it is only through an understanding of the past and the processes that have transformed events and experiences that we are able to create a shared understanding about the world, how it operates and the impact it has had upon us. As Scott Bukatman has put it: 'To have memory is to have history. It is also to develop empathy.'[57] The idea that cinema will create these shared memories and thereby generate the empathy necessary to overcome differences and forge alliances between people is a comforting but ultimately simplistic idea, one that attempts to place responsibility for social development back with technology and having the 'right' kind of media input placed into our collective programming. It is this type of strategy that Andrew Calcutt has termed as 'virtual politics' – a contemporary situation in which we cannot comprehend objective reality because of a 'poverty of ideas and the exhaustion of politics'.[58] Instead, the media are either applauded or derided as the arena in which issues of power are debated and the world beyond the screen mostly ignored. Indeed, Calcutt notes the ironic possibility that 'a greater sense of community is now provided by the media than the labour movement itself'.[59]

The suggestion that our position as viewers or consumers unites us more than that of workers is an intriguing one, with critics often tending to conflate both positions in an attempt to situate texts and their audiences into modes of resistance. Such a proposition returns us to Munt's criticisms of contemporary cultural studies cited at the beginning of this chapter, admonishing the theoretical tendency to see power as purely semiotic and to claim working-class audiences as being subversive in the mere act of consuming particular texts. While this view of the active audience makes a refreshing change to determinist approximations of the audience as passive victims of the media, it nevertheless smacks of a desperation to position the working class as an enduring, easily identified and resistant group.

This tendency is exemplified by recent audience research, such as that conducted by Martin Barker and Kate Brooks on the reception given to the film *Judge Dredd* and the way in which different groups might 'negotiate the meanings of the film'.[60] Chief among the questions the authors ask is 'what role do images of the future play among different groups?'[61] yet despite criticising past audience research for being 'remarkably selective'[62] they sift through a limited number of respondents and select only two groups for analysis; three black men in their twenties whose views are said to exhibit 'a black response to films',[63] and boys aged between 14 and 15 who are problematically claimed to be 'working class'. How this economic status has been ascribed is not detailed, just as their ethnicity is not specified in order to place them within another easy demographic identity. Indeed, Barker and Brooks appear so eager to celebrate resistance at seemingly any cost that these boys are simply held to be representative of the working class in order to make a point, their fascination with special effects described as 'sensuous participation'

in the action genre and mysteriously construed as 'an enthusiastic refusal from within'.[64] The authors ignore the politically naïve, apathetic comments the boys make concerning the likelihood of SF dystopias and, seemingly in order to end their study positively, conclude by stating:

> In Britain and, in related ways, in many other industrial countries, the 1980s–90s saw a downturn in working-class activity, and a rise of various kinds of right-wing populism. But a class does not disappear just because its members lack confidence for a time. Instead, their group awareness goes underground, and comes out in strange forms. Action films, we suggest, are one of those.[65]

The main problem with this contention is its lack of evidence, demonstrating the extent to which both those chosen as representatives of the working class and evidence of their potential for 'resistance' are each equally contentious, and almost desperately sought. Ultimately, we do not know how audiences will react to texts but can be sure that responses will differ, just as critical interpretations so obviously have. In any case, it is important to remember that just as all media messages are essentially polysemic – capable of being read in a number of different ways – so every claim made about subversive potential can be countered by the possibility that 'radical' content in cultural products functions partly to sustain the notion of democracy and to diffuse any threat to the established order. This is certainly Per Schelde's contention, who argues that 'SF's main function is to allow people to let off steam, and to vicariously fight off their oppressors for a couple of hours before going back to the grind.'[66]

This possible cathartic function is particularly relevant to the cyborg film, for even if revolt is not neutralised textually, contextually it occurs within a genre generally associated with entertainment and escapism. While Schelde is pessimistic about the SF film's political potential and seems to suggest, like Glass, that any radical content is elided by the conflicting impulses of the medium, Telotte remains hopeful, arguing that although denouements tend to stress private gratification above collective solutions, 'perhaps a private happiness is the best we can hope for, that the only counter against the various forces that seem to condition our lives and disenfranchise our bodies lies along that path in a turn into the self'.[67]

The problem with this argument is that it is exactly in keeping with the self-interest that continues to divide people. Telotte finally invokes his own 'double vision' in arguing that the robot represents 'an image that underscores a degree to which we have become mechanised, programmed beings, bodies detached from all spirit', yet simultaneously suggests that this image might 'help us to know ourselves once more, to discern our humanity, and thus to reconstruct our sense of self'.[68] He therefore subscribes to postmodernism's faith in the reflexive capacity of media products, and specifically the cyborg film, to supposedly render hegemonic power transparent and thus 'open up holes in the patterns of being constructed – holes that complement or even undermine the larger narrative trajectory'.[69]

What the 'larger narrative trajectory' of these films might be remains uncertain however, and Telotte ultimately acknowledges that his reading is a wish-fulfilment

fantasy because 'it implies that the very forces that propel change in our culture may, in their own schizophrenic way, foreground the power they wield'.[70] In other words, it implies that the tools of resistance are made available through cultural products themselves, irrespective of who controls their production. Richard Dyer describes this teleology as the hope that 'at our worst sense of it, entertainment provides alternatives to Capitalism which will be provided by Capitalism'.[71]

The cyborg film thus offers a fantasy in which cyborg workers legitimate their creation through proving to be more equipped for survival than their human counterparts. As has been argued, these texts also stress individual adaptation over collective, revolutionary concerns and even in the rare exceptions where revolts are seen to be successful, as in *Total Recall* and *RoboCop 3*, they studiously avoid representing what an alternative future would look like. We never see how workers would organise themselves or evaluate how different economic systems might operate. Instead there is a pronounced shift in emphasis, as with *Metropolis* and *Blade Runner*, onto other concerns such as romance and family unity which take precedence over achieving equitable economic and social relations. Still more interestingly, it is only cyborg workers with a relative degree of privilege that acquire any sense of awareness about their society's economic relations and their position within it, strongly suggesting that those on the lower end of the social strata are too disenfranchised and depoliticised to achieve change on their own.

Although these are evident flaws, we might well ask whether it is the function of SF cinema to imagine ways of achieving a more democratic future, or whether it is better equipped instead to tell us about the present. In the apparent absence of any political alternatives to Capitalism critics such as Codell have claimed that 'we are left, instead, with hopes pinned on a synthesis of human affections and high-tech invulnerability'.[72] The cyborg's paradoxical nature is thus invoked in a seemingly contradictory desire for 'human affections' (signified as it is in film by romance and family), while the desire for 'invulnerability' implies that such emotions are, in fact, undesirable and unnecessary. Just as these aims clearly conflict with one another the cyborg's ability to provide a coherent political identity is also obviously limited, yet in asserting that humanity can triumph over oppressive conditions, cinematic cyborgs reassure audiences that the human spirit will endure and thus provide an important sense of hope, which is infinitely preferable to defeatism. Furthermore, despite obvious constraints, oppositional ideas can nevertheless be glimpsed within cyborg films, which offer a means of articulating concerns about Capitalism and its effect on workers, expressing anxieties about potential dehumanisation that although exaggerated (and all too easily allayed) still merit our continued attention, particularly as technology is likely to impact on our lives in ever more intimate ways.

When Manfred Clynes coined the term 'cyborg' it was used to describe a physically modified astronaut equipped with such radical alterations as collapsed lungs and the absence of a nose or mouth; envisaging a worker literally redesigned to perform a specific task, for whom existence on Earth would presumably be impossible.[73] Although obviously fantastical, the future implications for any such posthumans

demands some thought in the here and now, for when would rights become an issue for such creations? By the same token, what happens to the very notion of rights if Marxism becomes truly defunct as a political discourse?

This chapter began by asking what the ramifications might be of neglecting issues of class and has pointed to some of the problems in defining this term. Post Marxism, how we might understand class, and the relevance it has to subjectivity and present relations of social power remains a moot issue. As pessimistic as some have become about its continued applicability, and despite the tendency to consign it to the academic wasteland of other 'total' theories, Marxism's central tenets and terms have nevertheless been instrumental in how we have come to assess ourselves. The division between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has been extended, for example, to acknowledge other social divisions, resulting in a more complex understanding of identity and conflict. The concept of oppression has also altered accordingly, beyond its strictly economic meaning, with a corresponding extension of alienation. Engels' notion of 'false consciousness' has been similarly adapted to explain how the oppressed collude in the maintenance and continuation of oppressive conditions – with the media both blamed for manufacturing consent and upheld as a potentially radical force by which to expose and contest hegemonic ideas.

The discourses that have emerged in cultural theory since Marxism's relative decline have thus borrowed heavily from its main ideas, yet they offer differing accounts for the division of interest and opportunities perceived today, without suggesting any clear form of alliance. What is still clearly lacking is the faith and unity necessary to overcome these divisions, although it seems certain that the solutions needed will not be found in the global overthrow of Capitalism, or, for that matter, in the cyborg. In fact, the contradictions that are embodied by the cyborg appear to reflect the ruptures and factionalism that are all too apparent within theoretical discourses themselves. Hence, feminists argue about whether technology is intrinsically patriarchal, endlessly debating whether it is better to be a cyborg or a goddess, postmodernists claim that the cyborg's artificial nature paradoxically contains the most authentic account of humanity, and no one seems able to agree on any coherent understanding of how power operates or how it can be opposed. Chela Sandoval exemplifies the present intellectual impasse because her concept of 'cyborg consciousness' appears to derive from class politics yet claims that deconstruction is an effective strategy for resistance, thereby valorising theory itself as a political act.

The question of identity seems integral to both social and academic division, with the impact of Foucauldian theory explaining subjectivity as the product of competing discourses and experiences. Yet if agency and power are only achievable through forming distinctions and oppositions to those from other social groups then how are potential coalitions to be achieved? While it is possible that a union of different marginalised groups might converge under the banner cyborg, as is suggested by Haraway's 'infidel heteroglossia', whether the metaphor could function as a contemporary substitute for class – a means of connecting gender, race and sexuality within the sphere of economics to unite the fragmented Left, seems like

wishful thinking born of the same desperation noted in other critical interpretations to find some means of unification by any means necessary.

Even attempts to use cyborgs as a means of uniting people has been strongly criticised by some. Monica J. Casper, for example, takes Haraway to task by stating that:

> If we are all cyborgs then the analytical value of this concept in differentiating *cyborg* from other identities and subject positions becomes diminished. Further, despite a proliferation of cyborgs, there are many ways in which contemporary social actors both accept and resist the cyborg image. By suggesting that we are all cyborgs, there is a danger in losing sight of these resistances, as well as of possible differences among cyborgs.[74]

Clearly, a reluctance to accept even a metaphorical commonality is evidence of the greater emphasis now placed on creating distinctions rather than coalitions. Yet for other critics, such as Chris Hables Gray, cyborg identity is seemingly undeniable, arguing that with the impact of present social developments: 'it may help us to confront these changes if we accept our new status as cyborgs and begin to look at these changes from a cyborgian point of view'.[75]

What advantage is to be gained from adopting such an identity is unclear, just as it is uncertain whether refusing cyborg subjectivity is the equivalent of false consciousness. The answers to such questions will vary according to the interpretation made of such a persistently open signifier. As William R. Macauley and Angel J. Gordo-Lopez assert: 'It is the (in)ability to maintain distinct boundaries which facilitates new readings of cyborgs',[76] yet it is the cyborg's very lack of distinction that invariably limits its political potential also. After all, if *Terminator 2*'s liquid metal man, the T-1000, can be emblematic of 'feminine fluidity' (Claudia Springer); a homosexual S and M figure (Jonathan Goldberg); a postmodern embodiment of cinema's spectacular nature (J.P. Telotte); a representation of America's fear of a multicultural society (David J. Hess); *and* a symbol of permanent class upheaval (Doran Larson) then the cyborg is clearly so open to interpretation that it is as loaded with problems as the notion of class itself.

These drawbacks aside, and despite Judith Squires' contention that 'the cyborg has become a symbol of philosophical challenge rather than an icon of political change',[77] progressive implications remain in symbolising a potential unity, and such a hope is admittedly hard to relinquish. As Sharona Ben-Tov has argued: 'We are cyborgs because we're the instruments of a powerful technological-Capitalist system that appropriates and reshapes the world at an ever increasing rate. At the material level the lives of working people, as well as the natural environment, are appropriated and consumed by the system's expansion.'[78]

What can be achieved from such a subject position is suitably symbolised by the cinematic cyborg, providing an understanding of our construction and exploitation, as well as the potential falsity of ideology, and importantly envisaging our ability to transcend subjugation. On a more regressive level however, the cinematic cyborg can provide a false sense of technological empowerment, a fatalistic

affirmation of Capitalism's inevitability, and a corresponding belief that it is only ourselves that are capable of being transformed. Neither reading can truly be awarded any preference for, to paraphrase Capek, they are all equally right.

Gray *et al*. have argued that 'the cyborg lives only through the symbiosis of ostensible opposites always in tension'[79] – and if this is true, if the cyborg needs these dualisms to even exist, then it can never adequately provide the coherence needed for creating an equitable and inclusive future. As Hugh Gusteson asserts: 'Just as nature cannot save us, technology cannot save us, and the working class cannot save us, so also the cyborg cannot save us. We created the cyborg, just as we created nature, technology, and the working class, and only we can save ourselves.'[80]

Who is constituted by this notion of 'we' and what exactly we need to be saved from remains open to debate, depending to a large degree on the perceived problems (and their alleged causes) that variously inform our political understanding, for just as power operates on a multiplicity of levels, so subjectivity has more than one facet. As Haraway has put it, 'the production of universal, totalizing theory is a major mistake that misses most of reality, probably always, but certainly now'.[81] While it would be wrong to dismiss Marxism as just such a theory, it nevertheless seems inevitable that our understanding of identity should now be extended beyond class-based parameters, particularly given the increasingly nominal means by which class is presently defined. As this chapter has made clear, class position is far from simply determined and cannot therefore foster the alliances needed in order to build a better future, nor even a more accurate vision of humanity. Other modes of subjectivity, equally contentious and contested in their own way, also impact upon twenty-first century identity, and it is to these that the following chapters now turn.

4

The Synthetic Female: Cyborgs and the Inscription of Gender

Just as the cyborg can help us to re-think the relevance of Marxism today, and, in particular, a class-based notion of identity, so it can also be usefully employed to determine how gender is understood and contested within contemporary academic analysis. Indeed, the majority of recent publications on the cyborg have focused directly on its applicability to gender issues, including Springer's *Electronic Eros* (1996), Balsamo's *Technologies of the Gendered Body* (1996), and several collections of articles linking the cyborg with feminist concerns, such as *Cybersexualities: A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace* (ed. Jenny Wolmark, 1999) and *The Gendered Cyborg* (ed. Gill Kirkup *et al*., 1999). This interest can be attributed to a number of factors. Since Donna Haraway first identified women as cyborgs in her 'Manifesto' the cyborg has served as an apt metaphor by which to interrogate key concerns within contemporary feminist discourse, inspiring renewed debate about female subjectivity and influencing a reassessment of women's relationship to technology. As Balsamo has put it: 'The cyborg provides a framework for studying gender identity as it is technologically crafted simultaneously from the matter of material bodies and cultural fictions.'[1] Yet while the cyborg is potentially useful in exposing the extent to which gender identity is manufactured, it has also revealed fierce divisions within feminism itself, leaving critics at odds in deciding whether it represents a positive icon or otherwise. It is this debate which this chapter principally investigates, using the 'female' cyborg's representation in cinema in order to articulate relevant theories concerning the cultural construction of femininity, and to assess, in turn, feminism's ambiguous relationship to technology. Cyborg representations of masculinity are touched upon towards the end of the chapter and discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6, yet it is images of femininity, subjecthood and power that the analysis focuses on here in order to determine how cinematic representations and feminist discourse each construct a specific understanding of female identity, and to question the extent to which the cyborg can indeed be claimed as a progressive icon for women.

Haraway's 'Manifesto for Cyborgs' laid the groundwork for what has later been termed as 'cyberfeminism', indicating a central rift in feminist debate, taking issue with those who considered technology to be an intrinsically oppressive force operating in the interests of patriarchy, and suggesting instead that it might actually

help to liberate women. Being identified as 'cyborg' was considered a preliminary gesture in this regard, yet there are notable inconsistencies in what is meant by the term, for while Haraway asserts that 'the cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world',[2] she also claims that it represents 'what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century'.[3] Some degree of confusion is thus evident in determining whether the cyborg is a hypothetical vision of the future or a symbolic evocation of the present. More to the point, Haraway exposes her own investment in gender boundaries through claiming that the cyborg has particular relevance for women. Despite asserting that 'there is nothing about being "female" that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as "being" female',[4] Haraway nevertheless maintains that 'being' cyborg can create affinities between women and thus bridge the divisions that exist between them. Cyborg identity thus appears to be a means of *unnaturally* binding women together, irrespective of their race and class, in order to enable alliances to be forged. Acknowledging that oppression is more than economic in basis, Haraway argues that 'no Marxian version of identity can firmly ground women's unity',[5] yet her alternative political framework is woolly at best, imagining 'new kinds of unity across race, gender, and class'[6] without stating how this might occur and oddly seeming to privilege women in high-tech industries as being ideally positioned to head a revolutionary vanguard. Ultimately, as Gill Kirkup points out, while the Manifesto's 'usefulness for cultural deconstruction of gender has become apparent, its usefulness as a tool for material change has yet to be proved',[7] even if there are political motives at stake.

A fundamental attraction of the cyborg for Haraway is its disruption of 'natural' or easily identified categories, suggesting that there are 'great riches for feminists in explicitly embracing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of clear distinctions between organism and machine'.[8] She consequently perceives 'feminist cyborg stories' as being subversive because they 'reverse and displace the hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities'.[9] Whether or not cinema's cyborgs can be similarly viewed is uncertain however, and is a question this chapter will duly investigate. While Haraway refers to the works of SF writers, such as Joanna Russ, Octavia Butler, James Tiptree, Jnr and Samuel Delany, she mostly ignores cinematic examples of the cyborg in her celebration of this figure. Indeed, the only cinematic reference made in her Manifesto is to the replicant, Rachael (Sean Young), in *Blade Runner*, who Haraway claims, stands as the 'image of a cyborg culture's fear, love and confusion'.[10] Yet Rachael also demonstrates the limitations of Haraway's ideas, for despite being in a position of relative privilege compared to the other female replicants, she is a powerless and vulnerable figure who never acquires individual agency, exists only at the whim of the male figures in her life, and who epitomises 'femininity' as performance because she is not a 'real' woman, but a generic cliché. Moving from a typical film noir femme fatale to a virtuous damsel in distress over the course of the narrative, Rachael not only changes her demeanour but additionally alters her appearance halfway through the film in order to better resemble the images of femininity owned by her new man, the blade runner of the title, Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford). She never forms an identity of her own, or,

indeed, any progressive affinities with her cyborg sisters. Yet even such an ostensibly negative representation has been reclaimed by some feminist critics, for as Balsamo points out, Rachael not only 'reasserts the social and political position of women as object of man's consumption', she also 'contradicts the myth of female identity'.[11] It is precisely through questioning the basis of what is real or authentic in terms of femininity that such images of the synthetic female help to articulate feminist readings of gender in cinema, and to question, in turn, the extent to which all women are similarly fabricated in their appearance and identity.

Science fiction cinema has presented a number of female cyborgs over the years that similarly challenge Haraway's conception of the cyborg as a 'post gender' creature, with each displaying instead how gender identity is firmly inscribed upon this figure. These representations play upon familiar stereotypes of either approved or reproved female behaviour, and may consequently be evaluated as 'feminist cyborg stories' also – foregrounding as they do a dichotomous and inherently patriarchal view of femininity. Similar scenarios have been perpetuated from the earliest cinematic examples of female artifice, with any demonstration of assertiveness being deemed a threat to the dominant order and typically punished by death. To survive as an artificial woman in SF cinema necessitates conforming to approved standards of behaviour and generally deferring to male authority – a fact which highlights inequalities in gender representation, as well as in wider society itself. Whether such films draw attention to these inequalities or simply sustain them is a question that will be fully considered. The fact that all the films discussed within this chapter have been directed by men (with only one exception) indicates a vast discrepancy in terms of who has access to particular modes of cultural production, and to the technologies required therein, yet how they are understood and used remains open.

The theoretical claims made for the female cyborg, particularly the utopian potential claimed by Haraway, are usefully questioned by the numerous 'living dolls' populating the SF film, arguing that any attempt to determine the cyborg's progressive potential must acknowledge the narrative fate of such figures. It is also argued that although images of manufactured femininity represented by the cinematic cyborg can be progressively read as examples of gendered 'masquerade', they are problematic nevertheless. Feminist critics such as Joan Riviere and Mary Anne Doane have used the term 'masquerade' to argue that cinematic representations of women reveal the extent to which 'feminine' appearance and behaviour is both unnatural and patriarchally constructed.[12] This concept is exemplified by images of artificial women that have appeared in cinema over the years, for just as they tend to be created by men in their own interests, playing out stereotypes such as the compliant sex model or the dutiful housekeeper, this can be seen to reflect how actual women have tended to be marginalised and confined within specific codes of acceptable behaviour.

The notion of masquerade as a cinematic (and societal) convention is helpful insofar as it makes femininity itself subject to scrutiny through the hyperbolic performances of female stars. As Doane describes it, such parody is 'an acknowledgement that it is femininity itself which is constructed as a mask – as the decorative

layer which conceals a non-identity'.[13] Yet there are also evident problems with such an assertion, for it assumes that underneath this 'mask' of femininity there is no real identity – an idea that recalls Sadie Plant's reduction of women to 'zeroes' and her claim that there is no need for female subjectivity to be outlined on the grounds that, simulation aside, 'there is no subject position and no identity . . . woman cannot exist'.[14] While such a stance is potentially liberating in refuting any essential 'womanliness' that links women together, it veers dangerously towards reinforcing the idea that women have no signification without men. Such a view simply validates the psychoanalytic belief system, ostensibly challenged by Plant, that seeks to define women via their relationship to men and particularly by their presumed lack. By the same token, although cinematic representations can be seen to make the masquerade of femininity explicit, it remains to be seen whether parody alone, in the absence of any alternative representations, can actually be claimed as progressive.

Indeed, even where 'non-traditional' depictions of female characterisation have occurred, the negative reaction a number of feminist critics have displayed towards them has been marked. The muscular assertive heroines that emerged in SF cinema during the late 1980s and 1990s are a case in point, with characters such as *Aliens*' Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) and *Terminator 2*'s Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) provoking particularly strong reaction from critics. That both figures were variously labelled as 'cyborg' and 'transsexual' exposes the extent to which the cyborg can be seen to confound male/female distinctions, yet such labelling also reflects the binary thinking that underpins much of gender discourse, and which a number of feminist critics merely perpetuate.

As active protagonists, both Ripley and Connor transgress traditional female roles, yet were strangely condemned for this, even by female critics. For example, Vivian Sobchack asserts in her article, 'The Virginity of Astronauts', that Ripley (in her first incarnation in *Alien*) is 'hardly female' and deplores the fact that she is apparently 'denied any sexual difference at all'.[15] Sobchack's concern that Ripley is made into a 'rational and asexual functioning subject'[16] (a description which negatively likens her to a machine) is explained by the psychoanalytical approach she adopts, perceiving a 'repression' of female difference within the SF genre as a whole. Yet in emphasising the apparent need to delineate sexual difference, Sobchack seemingly legitimates a patriarchal division between the sexes. Despite appearing to take a feminist standpoint in criticising the genre for its apparent absence of women, what she achieves instead is to support an ideology that insists on defining women reductively, as she puts it, as 'Mother and Other',[17] while failing to note the transgressive potential of characters, such as Ripley, who are not explicitly 'feminised'.

Attributing cyborg status to such characters implies that they are not 'real' women while the insistence on reading them as pseudo-male, as Sharon Willis does in her article 'Hardware and Hardbodies: What Do Women Want?', simply bolsters the dualistic logic that codes action and assertiveness as inevitably and intrinsically male. Willis refers to Ripley and Connor's changing physical appearance (and particularly their increased musculature) as 'revised embodiments of

femininity [which] stress the body's constructed character as costume, a costume that asks us to read it both as machine and as masculinity'.[18] Why muscles should automatically be linked to masculinity is clearly based upon culturally ascribed notions of appropriate male and female appearance, and Willis simply betrays her own inability to conceive the women she appears to celebrate as representing more than a form of male drag.

A 'genuine' female subjectivity, one that is not confused with or dependant on its relation to men, once again appears all too elusive. Whether cyborg images can help to create such a subjectivity, or whether they merely reify women's view of themselves through a patriarchal lens, remains uncertain. Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement that 'woman is not born but created' is true of all women expected to conform to specific codes of behaviour and the role played by the media in legitimating such codes has been a fundamental aspect of feminist criticism. However, the extent to which certain critics appear to support the notion of an intrinsic and essentialist gender divide demands greater scrutiny, particularly as such assertions fail to provide any alternative to 'traditional' patriarchal constructions of female identity. If womanhood is a man-made concept then the options available to women in either supporting or denying its veracity are surely crucial.

While Chapter 3 concerned itself with the dream of the perfect worker, a different but not altogether unrelated fantasy can also be seen to have manifested itself in the cyborg film: the dream of creating the perfect woman. The mythic archetype of this dream is the story of Pygmalion and Galatea, in which a sculptor's devotion to the goddess Aphrodite is rewarded with her statue being brought to life. The story has since been followed by a series of tales about artificial women, some of which have even been attributed some basis in truth. The philosopher Rene Descartes was said to have possessed a 'female' automaton, which he referred to as 'Francine'. In 1640, while accompanying him on a sea voyage, 'she' was allegedly thrown overboard by the Captain, who believed her to be the work of the devil.[19] While the story seems spurious enough, it is nevertheless intriguing in light of Descartes' views about the uniqueness of the human soul. The inventor, Thomas Alva Edison, became the subject of a similar story written in 1886 by Villiers del'Isle Adam. Entitled *L'Eve Future*, the tale dubs Edison 'the Wizard of Menlo Park' and fictionally attributes him with creating a perfect woman, complete with a 'pure' soul. The rationalist quest for achieving perfection through technology is thus transmuted into manufacturing an ideal female, using science in place of divine intervention in updating the Galatea myth, yet with less than ideal results. Jasia Reichard proposes that there are three main types of artificial woman in fiction: a romantic and dreamlike woman, a practical household companion, and 'a passive doll whose great virtue, by saying practically nothing, is to become a flattering mirror for the man who falls in love with her'.[20] *L'Eve Future* belongs very much to the first of these categories, yet is ultimately a tragedy.

A young Englishman, Lord Ewald, falls in love with singer and comedienne, Alicia Clary, who is superficially beautiful but deemed to have a 'common' personality. A solution is offered by Edison, who makes an android double of

Alicia, named Hadaly (Iranian for 'ideal'[21]), and even manages to create a soul by some supernatural means. Ewald accordingly falls in love and ships 'her' back to England, yet a fire breaks out on the ship and the creation is destroyed. Significantly, while the original Alicia also drowns in the wreck, only Hadaly is mourned by Ewald.

According to Villiers' bibliographer, Robert du Pantarice de Heussey, the story derived from a dinner party conversation in which the writer heard a tale about a young Englishman who committed suicide and was found in bed next to a wax effigy of a girl from London renowned for her beauty. An American engineer present at the telling of this tale claimed that he could have prevented the tragedy by imbuing the doll with life. Although the assembled crowd, with the exception of Villiers, laughed at this, the man reportedly said: 'You can laugh, but my master Edison will soon teach you that electricity is as powerful as God.'[22]

Rosalind Williams has claimed that Villiers intended the story as a reminder that a technological paradise, however tempting, is false and potentially fatal,[23] yet it is not simply the folly of science alone that is indicated in this tale, but that of desiring an impossible perfection in women. According to Raymond Bellour, Villiers had experienced a number of unhappy love affairs and had, like his fictional Lord Ewald, impossibly idealised women, yet Bellour also finds in *L'Eve Future* future implications of the 'star as machine', terming the film industry itself as 'a factory for the production of ideals'.[24] As we shall see, representations of female cyborgs largely reproduce the same ideals of femininity we have grown accustomed to seeing on screen, thus highlighting the extent to which these images are not only false, but literally man-made. Interestingly, in the original novel of *Metropolis*, written by female writer Thea von Harbou, the 'robot' is made with transparent skin over a dull silver skeleton, its face formless and waiting to be imprinted, significantly described by its creator, Rotwang, as: 'Futura . . . Parody . . . whatever you like to call it. Also: delusion. In short: it is a woman. Every man-creator makes himself a woman.'[25] The fantasy of female perfection created through the male imagination is thus held to be a common dream, underlining the extent to which all such fantasies are parodies of 'femininity' itself.

Lester del Rey's *Helen O'Loy* (1938) serves as another literary prototype that plays with these ideals. A female robot is purchased as a housekeeper by two bachelors yet she starts to exceed her programming. Her cooking and cleaning are impeccable but having read some juvenile romances and watched television melodramas during her chores she decides that she needs a husband and duly falls in love with one of the bachelors. Created to serve men, the fiction of her cultural environment influences her to want the same things as a 'real' woman. After a troubled courtship they eventually marry and live a happy life together, yet Helen destroys herself when he dies, her purpose having been transmuted into such wifely duty that she cannot imagine life without her husband. Essentially this is a comic fantasy whose joke is that Helen proves herself superior to 'real' women in managing to domesticate a formerly committed bachelor, yet she does so at the expense of ever becoming a person in her own right.

The story's influence can be seen in a host of films such as *Weird Science* (Hughes, 1985) where the perfect woman is similarly created via technology – in this case with a teenager's home computer. However, *Weird Science* reverses *Helen O'Loy*'s denouement, with real women (or, in this case, schoolgirls) proving preferable to their artificial equivalent. Lisa (Kelly LeBrock) is too unpredictable and independent for her insecure adolescent creators, Wyatt and Gary (Ilan Mitchell-Smith and Anthony Michael Hall), and bows out of the picture once classmates Deb and Hilly are suitably impressed by these former nerds. The boys learn that female perfection (i.e. someone they can impress) can easily be found in 'real' girls, and Lisa oddly elects to become a high-school gym instructor by the end of the film. Designed to fuel adolescent male fantasies, she is seemingly unable to step out of the role created for her. *Weird Science* thus plays upon the natural/artificial distinction of femininity by effectively looking through a hall of mirrors. Deb, Hilly and Lisa are each designed as props to the male protagonists' egos, and just as Helen O'Loy exemplifies the notion of femininity as 'masquerade', as learnt rather than innate behaviour, both actual and artificial women in the film similarly appear to exist in order to reflect what is desired of them.

E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandman* (1817) provides a warning against being deceived by such reflections. A young student, Nathaniel, falls in love with an automaton named Olympia whose only mode of communication is her ardent gaze. Although her vocal responses are limited to a mechanical 'ick ick ick', Nathaniel is convinced of the brilliance of her mind because she appears to listen so intently to every word he says. He is deceived by his illusions, of which Olympia is just one of many, and eventually dies a premature death because he cannot separate the real from the artificial. The inability to make this crucial distinction is central to cinema's cyborg narratives, just as the quest for perfection ultimately backfiring in some way is also a standard trope of the SF film. Olympia is ideal, as is Hadaly, because she reflects the desires inscribed upon her. Yet pliancy and submissiveness are far from certain in such creations. Like the robot worker that fails to perform to order, something frequently goes wrong with synthetic females, and although this is usually attributed to malfunction rather than revolt, the ethical questions involved in their construction are frequently overlooked. Consciousness rarely comes to these manufactured creatures, and rarely is any objection directly voiced about servitude or inequality as a reason for rebellion. Rather, the implication is that such experiments are bound to go wrong from the start, as if the female form itself were intrinsically irrational.

Alraune (Heinrich Galeen, 1928) is a case in point. Like the artificial Maria in *Metropolis* (and again played by Brigitte Helm), Alraune is a man-made woman who is literally born bad. The issue of a prostitute artificially inseminated with the semen of a condemned criminal, she becomes a seductress who destroys the lives of men and also ultimately herself. As with *Metropolis*, female sexuality is aligned with technology and labelled as unnatural and evil. Like Maria's robot double – the aptly named Parody – Alraune has no choice over her existence but is made to pay for it nonetheless. Both figures serve as a threat to the social (and clearly patriarchal) order and are accordingly condemned. If the message underlined by *Metropolis*'

finale is that human workers are more reliable than automatons because they are more controllable, its 'real' female is also shown to be infinitely preferable to any simulacra, rendering any replacement unnecessary and inadvisable.

The Perfect Woman (Knowles, 1949) is a variation on this theme. Designed as a comedy of errors it includes some rather unsavoury elements such as the eccentric Professor Belmond (Miles Malleson) taking an inordinate amount of interest in his creation, Olga's, underwear and, still more disturbingly, modelling her as a replica of his young niece, Penelope (Patricia Roc). This bears some comparison with the relationship between *Blade Runner*'s Dr Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel) and the replicant Rachael who is presented as his niece and kept, like the Professor's niece, as a virtual recluse from the world – seemingly in order to preserve her 'innocence'. The fantasy of the docile, acquiescent, ever-obedient female is played upon in *The Perfect Woman*, when the real niece mischievously masquerades as her uncle's doll, masochistically falling in love with the cad hired to take 'her' out (possibly the first man, other than her uncle, that she has ever seen). In order to prove her consequent redundancy, the real Olga malfunctions in the final scenes, exiting in a series of short-circuits and bangs, her invention no longer required now that this hitherto confirmed bachelor has been shown how little trouble a real woman can be.

The film and its values are obviously a product of their time and would doubtless not have been regarded as potentially offensive to audiences, yet its theme and implications nevertheless demand to be taken seriously for what *The Perfect Woman* reveals is a power differential that parodies an ideal femininity even as it inscribes it. While the audience of half a century ago may merely have laughed at Olga's unruly exit from the hotel bed-chamber, or the misogynistic banter between respective bachelors on the merits of a silent and obedient woman, or the humiliation the niece happily subjects herself to in an effort to emulate such 'perfection', these scenes are genuinely disturbing because the fantasy of female perfectibility itself remains unquestioned.

It would take post-war developments such as the women's movement to question and challenge such ideals, and to target the media's influence on their perpetuation, and the media, in turn, would comment on these changes and concerns within such vehicles as the SF film – albeit often crudely. *The Stepford Wives* (Bryan Forbes, 1975) is one such example, based on a novel by Ira Levin that seems to have taken its inspiration from Betty Friedan's landmark work *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Friedan's early feminist study examined the alienation and dissatisfaction experienced by housewives after the Second World War and became very influential in the burgeoning women's movement, encouraging an emergent feminist consciousness rooted in women's shared experiences and voicing a commonly felt desire for equal recognition outside the home. The film's plot describes the backlash that occurs in response to growing female emancipation as various men move their families out of the cities to the rural community of Stepford – where their wives are routinely murdered and replaced by automatons. Although the film has been dubbed as 'feminist' by a number of critics, the paranoia of its premise can be seen to undermine the validity of anti-patriarchal polemic, as does the fact that its central protagonist is herself less than emancipated.

Joanna (Katherine Ross) may have a career in her own right as a photographer, yet defers to her husband not only in moving to Stepford, but in opting to stay there. Even when best friend, Bobbie (Paula Prentiss), is 'replaced' it never occurs to her to simply leave, despite her own future being jeopardised. The hybrid of ideals created in the replica wives is also interesting. Both domestic and erotic, their bodies are noticeably enhanced to create a playboy playmate that will stay home, bake cakes and audibly enjoy sex, providing a precursor to the 'sleazy-demure' prototype of femininity requested in *Total Recall*.[26] Seemingly belying the need for replacement, our supposedly intrepid heroine is powerless, staying home rather than taking her life in her own hands, crying ineffectually when her husband confesses his intentions, and generally succumbing to a fate that could have been avoided – which reveals she was clearly not as threatening as he had believed. Still more disconcertingly, and perhaps revealingly also, the re-make of the film by Frank Oz (2004) plays the same scenario entirely for laughs.

If *The Stepford Wives*' projected backlash manifests itself in response to a sense of threatened masculinity, then Crichton's *Westworld* (1973) envisages a future in which this presumed emasculation has truly taken hold. A trip back in time is considered the ideal pick-me-up for newly divorced protagonist Peter Martin (Richard Benjamin) who marvels that both real guns and fake women are available in the synthetic Wild West provided by Delos – the resort where fantasies are designed to come true. Various androids are provided to entertain guests, including sex models within its respective 'worlds', yet while the commercial that opens the film focuses on a female client happily promoting the benefits of such 'servicing', it is the experience of male clients that is detailed. Forming the equivalent of Hoffman's Olympia, the fantasy offered by the resort's artificial women is a familiar one. As Mark Dery states: 'the female sex machine serves not only as a shiny surface on which male visions of femininity may be etched but as a mirror whose reflection reinforces the masculine sense of self'.[27] Thus Arlette (Linda Scott), the 'demure whore' android paired with Martin for a convenient one night stand, is programmed not only to provide sex but also to reassure him, stating 'I think you're very nice' the morning after their union. The fantasy of sex without strings is an exhilarating experience for the previously hung up Martin, who is apparently too sentimental about women and particularly his ex-wife. 'Everyone knows she took you for a ride', his friend says roughly to break him out of his nostalgia, clearly wanting to make him into a 'real' man during their vacation together.

It is another form of living in the past that Delos emphasises instead, where $1000 a day secures the chance to live out movie-style escapism, with romance and adventure transformed into sex and violence, and each promised without any consequences or responsibility. Before Crichton's trademark technophobia is evoked in the inevitable malfunction that occurs, sexual partners can be walked away from as easily as freshly killed corpses, leaving someone else to clean up the mess come nightfall. The film thus cleverly references cinema itself as a provider of fantasies consumed on a daily basis.

Just as guests don appropriate costumes and behaviour to be 'a part of the thing', the androids endlessly replay cinematic stereotypes. *Westworld*'s mise en

scène is that of any standard back-lot Western, as are the carefully staged events that occur there, and as such it begs an intriguing question. Female visitors to this resort would presumably have to conform to generic expectation and not take part in the brawls and shoot-outs or, indeed, ever stand a chance of being elected as sheriff. As the only two roles a traditional Western offers women is prostitute or virtuous home-steader, with robots fulfilling the first of these, a female visitor to *Westworld* would only have the latter role to perform – which would not appear to be much of a holiday! Gender transgression is seemingly impossible and even when the resort's androids appear to rebel they significantly remain confined to their gendered and generic roles.

Hence, the black-hatted cowboy kills for revenge while female resistance is shown by a slap around the face, thereby reiterating sharply contrasting gender roles familiar to audiences from the endless stream of films rolling off the Hollywood production line.[28] The robot snake that strikes in the desert appears to only be doing what would come 'naturally' and has notably more venom against the guests than any female. The film thus seems to uphold the idea of 'natural' gender roles in keeping with cinematic stereotypes, with women largely remaining passive victims throughout. The distinction between 'real' women and their android equivalents is hard to discern precisely because our understanding of female behaviour is tied to such cinematic clichés, a point that is epitomised by a scene in which a female tied up in a medieval dungeon and calling weakly for help is revealed to be an android. This provides a shock twist that is also one of the most revealing scenes of the film because we have ourselves been fooled into thinking she was a 'real' woman due to her very helplessness. *Westworld* appears to foreground such stereotypes in order to confront our expectations – with this figure fooling both the protagonist and ourselves because she is behaving like the damsel in distress that is automatically associated with 'typical' female behaviour. As Reynold Humphries comments: 'By revealing Delos as a dream world which the characters look upon as real, the film unmasks its own reality as an illusion.'[29] Yet while *Westworld* may reveal these illusions (and accompanying stereotypes) it does little to challenge them, particularly with respect to female representation. Furthermore, despite the film seeming to fit the criteria of a postmodern product in its intertextual referencing, self-reflexivity and obvious parody, there is a level at which, through replaying familiar roles, even through exaggerating them, they simply become 'naturalised' as a result.

Issues of gender representation become most complex and problematic when aiming to interpret the intentions of specific directors, particularly as an increasing sense of 'knowingness' within contemporary SF film has rendered male and female characterisation necessarily tokenistic. *Blade Runner*'s replicants are especially revealing in this regard. Playing on film noir roles of the 40s, Pris (Daryl Hannah) and Zhora (Joanna Cassidy) are emblematic of dangerous female sexuality and duly punished by death, while Rachael survives as the only example of acceptable femininity, her previously haughty demeanour displaced into vulnerability and dependence upon Deckard (Harrison Ford).[30] In keeping with the chauvinistic archetypes associated with film noir, Deckard possesses clearly misogynystic traits

and significantly only kills female replicants in the film (shooting Zhora in the back and Pris in her stomach), while Rachael is spared when she becomes his helper.

According to Telotte, she brings out Deckard's humanity,[31] yet Rachael brings out his aggression also and it is significantly when she attempts to leave his apartment and thereby exercise a measure of independence that he becomes enraged and violently aroused, forcing his will against her and drilling her with verbal responses to simulate mutual desire. The scene marks a turning point in their relationship as Deckard effectively replaces Tyrell in reprogramming her to his needs.[32] The ease with which he physically overpowers Rachael is indicative of the limited strength she has in relation to the other female replicants, which is in keeping with her more acquiescent nature. Whether or not Deckard would still be motivated to protect her if he had not felt sexually attracted to her (and gained her compliance) is doubtful. As it is, she spends the remains of the narrative hiding in his apartment waiting for his return and is last seen silently following his directions, devoid of autonomy or agency.

In an article entitled 'Metahuman "Kipple", or, Do Male Movie Makers Dream of Electric Women?' Marleen Barr points out the sexism of the film, not only in the abusive manner in which Rachael is treated, but also due to the fact that no male replicants are provided to service female colonists, with women alone being portrayed as objects to be consumed. Barr thus contends that 'the male film-maker dreams of electric women, women as manufactured sex objects'.[33] Director Ridley Scott's motives for casting are illuminating in this respect. Asked if he selected the actresses so that men in the audience would be attracted to them, thereby diminishing the distinction between human and android, Scott's simple retort was: 'If you're going to make female replicants, why make them ugly?'[34] This comment could refer as much to the proclivities of contemporary Hollywood as those of LA 2019's imaginary clientele, suggesting that little will have changed in any future scenario with regard to the ideals inscribed upon female representation. Hence, although the male replicants appear to have been given physical characteristics allotted to their function: with Roy Batty, as leader of the group, a beautiful alpha male, and Leon Kowalski, the menial labourer, appearing older, overweight and unattractive, the female replicants are all aesthetically stunning. Whatever a woman's function, even a synthetic one, it seems that good looks are paramount.

Another revealing aspect of casting is original screenwriter Hampton Fancher's wish for then girlfriend, Barbara Hershey, to play Rachael. Scott's ultimate choice of Sean Young was defended thus: 'Rachael needed to be very fresh. Perfect in fact. As if she'd just stepped out of the replicant vat. I couldn't get that from a thirty five or forty year old actress, no matter how talented they were.'[35]

This quest for perfection and fresh-ness is also the dream of purity and virginity, a blank canvas waiting to be imprinted. Rachael, after all, is literally a woman without a past, unlike her shadier sisters. It is in this pursuit of a feminine ideal that the youthful icon of female beauty persists, perpetuated in part by film-makers and the images they put on screen, yet Scott's oeuvre demonstrates his understanding and acknowledgement of such issues. *Thelma and Louise* (1991) and *GI Jane* (1997) are both gender-bending examples of his interest in transgressive

female roles, an interest that he pioneered with *Alien*'s Ripley, thus revealing a sense of awareness and responsibility in his depiction of women. Although the treatment of *Blade Runner*'s female replicants comments instructively on the continuation of patriarchy within this fictional future, their position appears to be sympathetically portrayed, suggesting that Scott intended much more than to merely titillate viewers.

Barr concedes that the film *unconsciously* critiques sexism, stating that: 'Pris and Zhora are more than mannequins, more than sex objects. So are all women. The film seems to demonstrate this fact even as it refuses to acknowledge it.'[36] I would argue however that, far from being accidental or unconscious, this acknowledgement of sexism is made explicit within the text, a key example being in the exchange that takes place between Deckard and Zhora backstage at The Snake-Pit. Significantly, Deckard poses as a representative of The Committee of Moral Abuses in order to gain access to Zhora's dressing room. That the creation of the replicants is itself a moral abuse, as is Zhora's role as an exotic 'snake dancer', is a sub-text underlying the following:

Deckard: Have you ever felt yourself to be exploited in any way?
Zhora: How do you mean 'exploited'?
Deckard: Well, like, to get this job. Were you asked to do anything that's lewd or unsavoury or . . . otherwise demeaning to your person?
Zhora: Are you for real?[37]

Zhora's response makes explicit the irony of his inquiry, which is further exacerbated when he suggests checking her dressing room for peepholes, asserting: 'You'd be surprised what a guy'd do to get a glimpse of a beautiful body.' Her reply evokes a life-time of cynicism as she says simply: 'No, I wouldn't.'

These allusions to voyeurism, and the objectification of the female under the male gaze, are verbally stated yet simultaneously undermined in the camera's tracking of Zhora showering and dressing. Her body is constantly on display, even in death, laid out on a city street in little more than underwear. Yet in the above exchange with Deckard, and by surrounding Zhora with naked showroom dummies in her final scene, Scott deliberately alludes to her exploitation, just as Pris's smiling contemplation of a Barbie doll reveals that *Blade Runner* is self-conscious in its representation of female characters.

In many ways the film is about cinema itself and the ways in which our memories are perhaps as illusory as those of the replicants. References to film noir conventions are made in the same vein as the 'orange body, green legs' overlay first heard almost subliminally during Rachael's interrogation at Tyrell's and later 'remembered' in Deckard's apartment[38] – referring to a past that, for all its familiarity, has only been indirectly experienced by filmgoers. Such techniques comment on cinema's capacity for artifice, just as *Blade Runner*'s preoccupation with photographs provides another self-reflexive aspect. When Rachael's photograph of her mother seems momentarily to come to life in Deckard's hand a trick of light and shadow is played that is indicative of cinema itself, as is the

Esper sequence in which Deckard's instructions to pan and zoom are akin to directorial cues. In truth, the two-dimensional image studied could never reveal such three-dimensional information, or magnify without any corrosion of image, which further underlines the illusory nature of film itself.[39]

As to the nature of 'femininity', no matter how sympathetic Scott's intentions, the myth of the perfect woman is nevertheless upheld in the film through Rachael's ultimate survival and the death of her unruly sisters. Pris and Zhora's transgression is decisively punished, just as the replicants' revolt is effectively thwarted, thus preserving the social and symbolic order.

Exceptions do exist however, and a film made in the same year and with similar themes to *Blade Runner* would not only allow such revolt to be realised, but notably place a female android at its helm. *Android* (Aaron Lipstadt, 1982) revisits the dream of a man-made woman with Klaus Kinski's mad scientist, Dr Daniel, inspired by the arrival of a real woman on his space station to create his perfect mate. Ensuing events reveal that women of the future are unlikely to be treated any better than a mechanical object, with Maggie (Brie Howard) sexually shared by the two fellow convicts she arrives with. She is even offered to the obviously disturbed scientist by these men in order to gain access to his secrets and though she declines sex with him there is clear coercion in her relationship with both convicts, particularly the leader, Mendez (Crofton Hardester). Indeed, the only male she appears to give herself to willingly is the android, Max 404 (Don Opper), whose innocence endears him to her. However, Maggie is subsequently raped and killed by Mendez shortly after this occurs, an act that seemingly proves that he considers her to be little more than his possession – and clearly less than human.

Android is an uncomfortable film to watch in its exploitative treatment of women – particularly as Maggie's violent death is unmourned within the text and only avenged by the peaceable Max because Dr Daniel changes his programming in order to protect his own safety. However, the last segments of the film serve as a fascinating contrast as a female android arrives to take centre stage. The doctor's aim of creating a female companion backfires as the android in question, Cassandra (Kendra Kirchner), displaying greater assertiveness than her human counterpart, shows that she is not to be trifled with. Born with the foresight of her namesake, she responds to the doctor's first lascivious grope with a slap in the face, swiftly followed by his murder. Refusing to be subjugated, Cassandra urges Max to leave the station with her, stating: 'We weren't meant to be someone's playthings.' The couple depart for Earth, illegally masquerading as humans, yet appearing to be a far superior species in terms of their relative morality.

Of all the synthetic females in SF cinema, Cassandra is exceptional in being liberated, even murderous, yet also allowed to survive. Her independence may be compromised in her union with Max, yet they represent a coupling that reverses traditional roles, with his gentle nature balanced by her strength and assertiveness. *Android* thus posits an alternative to the gendered caricatures of its ilk in providing a truly heroic artificial woman, even if the film's treatment of Maggie is too poor to happily ascribe progressive claims. Furthermore, while Cassandra's resistance makes a refreshing change to the dualistic portrayal of compliancy or deviancy

usually seen in representations of artificial females, these archetypes nevertheless predominate on film, a fact which forces us to question how specific parameters of female behaviour remain rigidly guarded, even in SF cinema.

In fact, compared to the literary SF that had inspired Haraway's concept of the cyborg, and the progressive aims she had for this figure, cinematic versions have proved to be much more conservative in their depictions of gender, particularly where artificial women are concerned. This clearly impacts upon Haraway's ideas, yet also draws attention to the fact that technology itself cannot be simplistically celebrated as empowering for women without addressing the uses to which it is put. Of course, critics have long voiced such detractions, yet many have also been inspired by the possibilities broached within Haraway's Manifesto in re-evaluating the basis of female identity. For example, Judith Halberstam has asserted that 'gender . . . like computer intelligence, is a learned imitative behaviour that can be processed so well that it comes to look natural'.[40] The cyborg was intended as a means of refuting this 'naturalising' process, and offering a way out of what Haraway terms as the 'maze of dualisms' governing Western epistemology,[41] yet even as a theoretical idea it has not managed to explain what lies beyond the patriarchal construction of femininity. Sadie Plant has even claimed that no separate identity exists, arguing that 'there is as yet no such thing as being a real woman. To be truly human is to be a real man.'[42]

In making this last point Plant, a self-proclaimed 'cyberfeminist', happily equates femaleness with Otherness, failing to perceive how this strategy simply reinforces traditional binaries, while also ignoring the fact that the 'real man' is equally non-existent in actual reality, being just as much a product of stereotypes and simplification as constructions of womanhood – and one that deserves equivalent scrutiny. As Halberstam points out 'femininity is always mechanical and artificial – as is masculinity',[43] yet such an acknowledgement has proved to be difficult within gender theory, which has only recently admitted to the idea that male identity might be considered to be equally unnatural. In SF cinema, by contrast, a questioning of gender roles has proved to be much more common with regard to male figures than female. The cyborgs of *The Terminator* and *RoboCop* films each testify to this, for both are hypermuscled parodies of 'traditional' masculinity who speak monosyllabically and communicate with weaponry. More significantly, they also undergo interesting revisions in successive sequels, acquiring traditionally 'feminine' traits of nurturing and empathy in being transformed into caring paternal figures in the 1990s. Masculinity was thus shown to be a mutable concept that is able to accommodate alternative characteristics. However, the fact that feminist responses to these revisions were largely hostile says much about the climate of distrust that exists within current gender debate, as well as testifying to the fact that critics often reinforce the very boundaries they ostensibly set out to dismantle. As was mentioned earlier, a similar response was given to alternative representations of femininity also, with Ripley and Sarah Connor tending to be disparagingly labelled as 'phallic' or 'masculine'.

In objecting to a perceived transvestism displayed by these characters, critics demonstrate that any supposed violation of specific gender codes is still deemed

unacceptable. Hence, Mark Crispin Miller accuses *Aliens*' Ripley of being 'hypermasculine and robotic' (even claiming that s/he provides Newt with a father figure!),[44] while Sarah Connor's physical transformation for *Terminator 2* has earned equal criticism from women such as Claudia Springer who asserts that 'while her strength and lean muscular physique can be appealing as a feminist alternative to helpless Hollywood women characters . . . it also represents a misogynistic rejection of all things feminine'.[45] That the very concept of 'all things feminine' should be validated by a supposedly 'feminist' critic (without due interrogation of such a contentious idea) simply reiterates the extent to which feminist theory is frequently diminished by its own proponents.

The apparent need to inscribe gender upon cyborgs reveals how notional such labelling is. For example, *Terminator 2*'s T-1000 shape-shifter – a bizarre incarnation, surely, of the post-gendered posthuman – has nevertheless been yoked into acceptable frames of sexist convention by Mark Dery, who claims that this figure is representative of 'femininity' because of its 'softness, vulnerability, and wetness (its transformations are accompanied by a faint slurping sound)'.[46] Yet Dery is immediately confounded by his own regressive theorisation in attempting to explain the 'phallic' implications of the T-1000's stabbing implements, and is ultimately forced to concede that it is, in fact, 'polygendered'.[47] Clearly, the dualisms Haraway's cyborg was designed to supersede remain all too evident, not only in the cyborg film, but among theorists who insist upon reinforcing regressive distinctions. The T-1000 embodies the very point and threat of mutability, and is troubling in its lack of boundaries and distinctions precisely because, without such concepts, critics would be bereft of easy analysis. It is not merely patriarchy that benefits from dualisms, after all, but the theorists who ostensibly oppose them, their mutual investment serving to perpetuate existing hierarchies rather than dismantle them.

Springer has contended that 'what is being debated in the discourses surrounding a cyborg future are contemporary disputes concerning gender and sexuality, with the future providing a clean slate, or a blank screen onto which we can project our fascination and fears'.[48] However, what is also being projected, as we have seen, are a host of preconceived ideas about innate traits and appropriate roles for men and women alike. Envisaging the future as a 'clean slate' necessitates a break with the past, along with a rejection of what is 'natural', yet in stressing the artificial instead, cyberfeminists simply employ new metaphors to reiterate old ideas about an essential femininity. Springer acknowledges the irony 'that a debate over gender and sexuality finds expression in the context of the cyborg, an entity that makes sexuality, gender, even humankind itself anachronistic'.[49] What is still more ironic is her own reinforcal of these concepts. Hence, the technology of the information age is deemed to be 'small' and 'mysterious' and thus quintessentially female in a reading that amply displays the problems of regressive dualisms, with Springer further claiming that 'cyborg films are in fact preoccupied with sexual difference; and one of their sites of contestation is the figure of the cyborg, whose technological form embodies metaphors of human sexuality: steely hard phallic strength is opposed to feminine fluidity'.[50]

These assumptions impose rather than expose a gendered reading, and are evidence of feminist theory's tendency to reinforce polarised distinctions. In her problematic but insistent labelling, Springer merely creates an unbridgeable divide that can envisage no alternative to traditional gender roles. Unfortunately, she is not alone in imposing this binary logic onto cyborgs and investing technology with essentialist traits, for feminism as a whole has been dogged by a similar contrariness. In fact, the tendency to regard technology as intrinsically patriarchal, the focal point of what Haraway refers to as 'goddess feminism', openly embraces supposedly 'innate' female traits such as nurturing and intuition, tending towards technophobia in aligning woman with nature and perceiving technologised man as an oppressor of both. Despite being intended to empower women, this stance serves merely to reinforce existing power structures while negating women's presence in the very industries that are central to twenty-first century economies. On the other hand, the opposing 'cyberfeminist' tendency to celebrate women's jobs in electronic industries (as Haraway does in privileging East Asian circuit assemblers as 'cyborg'), or stressing an intrinsic connection between women and computers (as Springer and Plant assert) is no way forward either. Just as demonising technology is misguided and fatalistic, so relying on technology to magically overcome social differences simply evades formulating real solutions, simplistically legitimating technoculture as utopian and forgetting, as Alison Adams points out, 'that women's relationship to technology is not always positive'.[51]

The divisions apparent in feminist responses to technology points to the fundamental difficulty of using the cyborg as a means of affiliation between women. Yet if feminism is conflicted in terms of how to address its subjects and form a coherent strategy for the future then it is clearly not alone for social, cultural and economic differences, marked as they are by factors such as race, sex and class, continue to divide people and to detract from making any observation about society or subjectivity that is not immediately refuted. Halberstam views the contemporary splintering of subjecthood as the inevitable consequence of marginalised groups beginning to address differences in experience and identity, arguing that 'the concept of the unified, bourgeois subject, in other words, has been shot through with otherness and can find no way to regroup or reunite the splinters of being, now themselves part of a class, race, and gender configuration'.[52] While this may be positively viewed as a healthy sign of differentiation, Andrew Calcutt evaluates the political opportunities rendered by such fragmentation as invariably limited, regarding 'an endless quest for self-expression' and over-reliance on technology to effect change as being primarily at fault for the political impasse we now find ourselves in.[53]

Even within feminism itself, divided by contradictory stances towards both technology and subjectivity, the possibilities of forming a unified agenda seem remote. Yet if the cyborg cannot promise a means of unification, as Haraway had hoped, then her contention that women must take an active role in shaping the future they want seems more relevant now than ever. Equal access to image production must surely play a crucial role in helping to shape cultural beliefs,

practices and expectations, for gender divisions are likely only to be perpetuated while such a profound power differential remains in Hollywood as the depiction of cyborgs clearly illustrates. Indeed, Erica Sheen has even contended that the gendering of cinematic cyborgs fulfils a specific cultural purpose in shoring up existing inequalities, asserting that 'narratives about the sexual identity of artificial life forms use cinema's increasing self-consciousness about the process of image-making not to test conventional definitions of gender but to consolidate them'.[54] There is little to be gained from taking too pessimistic a stance, yet the examples discussed demonstrate a remarkable conservatism, particularly with regard to representing synthetic women as fantasy or fear objects, with alternative examples, such as *Android*'s Cassandra, proving all too rare. Greater prominence among women in film-making may remedy this situation, together with a greater range of female roles, for dangerous stereotypes are being created, both on and off the screen, that clearly need to be challenged.

As new media technologies have advanced, the dream of creating the perfect woman has developed accordingly, to the extent that some have even begun to anticipate a real-life equivalent of the manufactured sex doll. The synthetic female has now gone multimedia and virtual women offering simulated sex are already on sale, yet advances in technology have also led to suggestions that are eerily reminiscent of *The Stepford Wives*, with porn publisher, Al Goldstein, asserting that his fantasy is to 'phase the wife out of the picture, to come home and hear a robot greet me . . . My wife knows she's on the way out. She's like a buffalo. She knows she's here temporarily until technology catches up.'[55]

Sally Pryor and Jill Scott contend that a peculiar form of emancipation might result from such a scenario, arguing that, with technology releasing women from sexual and reproductive roles: 'discrimination against women (mediated as it is through presumed ties to the body) would have no basis. Alternatively, there might be no socially perceived role for real women at all.'[56]

The democratic potential perceived here is a somewhat cynical embrace of technology, reasserting Shulamith Firestone's similar contention that only by sacrificing motherhood will women ever be truly equal. Like Firestone however, Pryor and Scott invoke the biological reductivism employed within patriarchy's (de)valuation of women, defined as it is by sexual attractiveness and the ability to have children, while failing to sufficiently criticise or counter this idea. To argue that sexual discrimination would be elided if these functions were met by technology is both naïve and simplistic, just as the alternative scenario – that women's 'social role' may be eclipsed altogether by such technologies – also appears negative in the extreme. The impact technology has on women's lives is always likely to be ambivalent, and either denouncing or unreservedly praising it are both clearly inaccurate responses.

Cultural anthropologist, Arthur Hawkins, maintains that the development of substitutes for human sexual organs is only a matter of time.[57] If and when this happens it seems evident that the first priority will be for the male market. Just as computer-simulated women such as Virtual Valerie and Donna Matrix have no male equivalent, the prototype 3D sex doll will almost inevitably be female.

Future technologies may take such caricatures off-screen and into the home, perhaps no substitute for the real thing, perhaps regarded as better.

Is the 'real' woman about to disappear altogether? The hairless, ageless, fat-free pin-up is already manufactured through the cultural images that pervade society, and which are emulated in turn by women having silicone implants to boost their bust size, starving themselves, or otherwise altering their bodies to better resemble unrealistic icons of female beauty. Such efforts may turn out to be in vain when the assembly line love machine arrives. Naomi Wolf envisages a post-feminist future in which technology has replaced 'the faulty, mortal female body', detailing a nightmare scenario in which women are reshaped in the image men require of them.[58] Already more teenage girls are electing to have plastic surgery than at any other time, indicative of the pressure to conform to a specific ideal. The performance artist Orlan's facial reconstructions are a parody of this cultural craze, yet her act also endorses mutability as a bizarre new freedom.[59] In her analysis of cosmetic surgery, Anne Balsamo perceives the industry as operating in the interests of men, yet many women claim to feel emancipated by their ability to alter their image, exemplifying the fact that, as consumers of technology, women's motivations are becoming increasingly complicated.[60] Going under the knife would seem to be a drastic means of empowerment, one that reiterates the extent to which female (self) worth is still mediated through the body, yet what these examples prove is that, in cyborging themselves to achieve greater levels of physical perfection, actual women have begun to parallel synthetic females on screen in ever more alarming ways.

Because of such developments, it is difficult to agree with Halberstam's claim that the female cyborg is 'a terrifying cultural icon because it hints at the radical potential of a fusion of femininity and intelligence'.[61] Not only is the problematic notion of 'femininity' again left moot, but the question of intelligence is equally unclear for, in cinematic incarnations at least, the female cyborg has relied much more on her looks than her brains. Indeed, it is in possessing an 'unnatural' sexual attractiveness that the female cyborg's greatest danger appears to lie. From *Metropolis*'s Maria doppelganger and evil manipulator of men, *Blade Runner*'s Pris and Zhora, the dominatrix-styled Borg Queen (Alice Krige) of *Star Trek VIII: First Contact* (Jonathan Frakes, 1996) and most recently the T-X (Kristanna Loken) of *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (Mostow, 2003), it is the threat of female sexuality and independence that is portrayed as terrifying, and which is accordingly restrained through the eventual elimination of these figures.

Given such tendencies, the immediate conclusion would be to suggest that mainstream cinema views the emancipated female with fear, deliberately filling its narratives with cautionary tales designed to bolster patriarchal concerns about sexual liberation. That this theme should appear in films made as early as 1926 strongly suggests that the so-called 'crises of masculinity' is far from recent phenomenon. Indeed, as Yvonne Tasker has pointed out, 'to speculate about the recent emergence of a crisis in masculinity implies that masculinity represented, say until the '60s, a stable category'.[62] In fact, masculinity, like femininity, is perhaps more accurately considered as a cultural product that has always been

subject to revision and deviation, as the work of anthropologists such as Margaret Mead helped to point out. Nevertheless, gender only became the subject of academic debate as part of the post-war liberation movement, and while this protean quality has led to optimism in some quarters, regarding the possibility of dismantling gender boundaries, it also appears to have led to their shoring up within certain areas, including SF cinema.

The Stepford Husbands (Fred Walton, 1996) is a case in point, presenting an interesting role reversal to the original film in which women's liberation has succeeded to the extent that women are now in charge of Stepford. Husbands are supportive of their wives' careers and help around the home, yet this is shown to be the consequence of having mind-altering drugs administered to them rather than having been literally replaced by automatons (or, indeed, electing to change themselves). The film presents seemingly intrinsic 'masculine traits', such as a love of sports and beer, having been screened out of their personalities by a diabolical female doctor in order to make men the partners their wives want, thus aligning the film with male paranoia about potential emasculation. However, the central female protagonist, Jodi (Donna Mills), shows herself to be a 'good' woman by accepting her husband as he is rather than trying to change him, and is shown to have the better marriage for it. Whether she would accept violent behaviour, excessive drinking or womanising is another matter. The narrative is disingenuously engineered so that when her husband is aggressive towards her it is seen as the result of the drugs given to him and therefore not his fault, but hers, and that of all the women making demands upon men. The wives themselves remain as much feminine stereotypes as their original counterparts, with perfectly coifed hair, manicures and make-up. Why bother putting so much work into their appearance if they already run things in Stepford? Within the ideology of the film it would seem that this is just how women naturally are.

The Stepford Husbands is not so much a female fantasy of ideal men as a warning that the sex wars are getting out of hand, suggesting that if men compromise too much women will take over. Yet although its paranoia is as marked as its patriarchal stance, concluding with an uneasy sense of the 'natural order' having been restored when the town's men regain control, it does raise the relatively neglected question of how ideals of masculinity have been constructed in the female imagination.

While the dream of the perfect woman has motivated numerous SF stories, women have found it harder to imagine their perfect lover as a machine, yet a number of authors have recently explored this premise, such as Lee's *The Silver Metal Lover* (1981), which focuses on a woman's ability 'to awake humanity in the soul of the male machine',[63] and Piercy's *Body of Glass* (1991), which updates the golem legend into a love story between female software expert, Shira, and Yod – the 'male' cyborg who she socialises and eventually falls in love with. In both stories it is women who possess intrinsically human qualities and the male that is perceived as Other. By gradually humanising these ostensible machines such narratives express faith in women's romantic powers of conversion, yet in successfully teaching artificial men how to be human, they also imply that if 'real' men cannot change, the male cyborg can do so only too well.

A male author's interpretation of what women want makes an interesting contrast. In Asimov's *Satisfaction Guaranteed* (1950), Clare Belmont, the neglected and insecure wife of an engineer, is used to test a new domestic robot named Tony. 'He' gives her confidence, with suggestions for new clothes, hairstyle and home furnishings, and even makes a romantic pass at her. She weeps all night before her husband's return and robot psychologist, Susan Calvin, subsequently determines that Tony must be rebuilt entirely to prevent other women from similarly falling in love. The pass is rationalised as an attempt to boost Clare's confidence, part of the service provided in fulfilling her fantasies and thus making her into the kind of woman her husband desires. Yet traditional masculinity is also interestingly reinterpreted by Asimov as Tony, the artificial man, shares an intimacy with Clare that would conventionally be characterised as 'feminine' because he is intuitive, nurturing and supportive in ways that are diametrically opposed to her husband. However, the story sadly falls short of consummating the relationship between Clare and Tony and we never find out what we really want to know: which is how Tony actually feels. As Jasia Reichard points out:

> In literature dealing with robots and women what the women really want is to imbue the machine with feeling. There will be no robot/woman love stories until such time as authors start including robots which are not just purpose built to please women but genuinely able to fall in love.[64]

Such love stories may be relatively rare but they offer an interesting insight nevertheless into differing ideals and desires. Asimov and Piercy's treatment of the same theme is distinguished by their contrasting perceptions of what women truly desire. While Tony teaches Clare to be the perfect wife and hostess, thus helping her to emulate a specific ideal, Shira teaches her cyborg lover to express emotion in order to both know himself and to understand her. Neither relationship is destined to be fulfilled, yet perhaps it is a sign of the distrust and cynicism of contemporary sexual relations that cyborg lovers have become more evident in literature and film. In fact, while artificial women are generally depicted as a bad idea within such narratives, synthetic men are often selected in preference to their human counterparts, often on the grounds that, like Asimov's unusual depiction of Tony, such figures tend to defy the masculine archetypes usually seen and thus present an alternative and, to some, a more appealing image.

Susan Seidelman's *Making Mr Right* (1987) is interesting because it is the sole example discussed with a female director at its helm, a fact made more curious because Seidelman deliberately perpetuates gender stereotypes in the film's characterisation – with the sole exception of the 'Mr Right' character of the title. The protagonist, Frankie Stone (Ann Magnusson), is cynical about relationships until commissioned to make an android into a woman-friendly commodity. Like Shira, Frankie makes a living out of software, fine-tuning personalities in her role as a PR expert. Yet although she has handled male images before, Ulysses (John Malkovich) is her greatest success because he genuinely does change, eventually becoming her lover. Ironically, he becomes better able to relate to women than his male creator,

and although his childlike nature remains troubling, leaving Stone consequently cast as nurturer, his decision to be with her at the end of the film indicates an increased level of maturity and commitment. He thus improves upon the men that have let her down in the past, epitomising, if perhaps also parodying, the feminist invocation of the 'new man' who is capable of intimacy and involvement.

It is curious that such figures as Ulysses, *Android*'s Max, and *ST: TNG*'s Data all appeared in the 1980s – a time when feminists began to vocalise the need for men to change – for each character exudes a clear sense of innocence and is not subject to testosterone, poor father figures, peer group pressure and whatever other biological, cultural and psychological factors supposedly shape masculinity. These figures thus promote an alternative form of being male that is not staked in opposition to 'female' characteristics and which therefore crucially permits some measure of equality in their relations with women. Anca Vlasopolos regards the cyborg as perfect male lover to be a transgressive fantasy because it displaces the 'natural' male from women's erotic choice. It also contradicts the violent images of male cyborgs so often stressed in academia. Vlasopolos sees no problem in the gendered archetypes of Piercy's *Body of Glass* (in which men are either violent or psychologically impaired); or in *Making Mr Right*, with its similarly negative view of 'natural' men. Rather, the cyborg is seen as presenting a progressive alternative image of masculinity, one that champions the sensitive 'new man' so often held to be a myth.[65] Indeed, perhaps it is no coincidence that the new man was also termed as the 'reconstructed' male within feminist dialogue, for this term and its implied process of dismantling a particular archetype of masculinity in favour of a new attitude and conduct that is more attuned to women actively engages with the notion that gender itself is intrinsically artificial, and therefore capable of being altered.

The fantasy of a blank canvas waiting to be imprinted is in some ways just as questionable for women to desire in partners as it is for men, yet differing intentions are revealed in such fantasies. To put the distinction bluntly, women appear to want emotionally open men who they can relate to, while the traditional male fantasy of the perfect woman is someone who has no emotional expectations and conforms to a particular stereotype of behaviour and appearance. Significantly, as far as gender is concerned, while male fantasies of the perfect female tend to emphasise gender difference, female fantasies of the perfect male seem to stem more from a desire to overcome such differences and forge an equal relationship instead.[66] Although relations are unequal in *Making Mr Right* in the sense that Ulysses is still learning from Frankie how to be human, it is striking that such stories find women seeking, not their opposite, but their likeness. The binary constructions of nature and culture, masculinity and femininity become confounded by such relationships, heralding a potentially promising coalition. Symbolically, the cyborg can thus prove useful, beyond forging romantic alliances or locating affinities between women of different backgrounds, and may even be used to transcend gender itself.

Given this potential, it is strange that Haraway has objected to the 'sensitive man' in a recent interview, describing him as 'a male person who, while enjoying

the position of unbelievable privilege, also has the privilege of gentleness'.[67] By thus perceiving all men to be uniformly privileged over women, and in denouncing any attempt to reconstruct traditional archetypes of masculinity, even those that might make men better able to relate to women, she thus reiterates the stake she and a number of other feminists have in maintaining a rigid gender divide. Indeed, in the same interview Haraway also admits that she cannot truly conceive of the cyborg as a 'post gender creature', as formerly claimed in her Manifesto, admitting instead that 'it's a polychromatic girl . . . a girl who's trying not to become woman but remain responsible to women of many colors and positions; and who hasn't really figured out a politics that makes the necessary articulations with the boys who are your allies'.[68]

Without these 'necessary articulations', the means of establishing any affinity between men and women is seriously undermined, thereby neglecting the cyborg's potential to genuinely transcend boundaries and forge progressive alliances. Haraway's cyborg thus sums up the dilemma facing feminism today in terms of attempting to account for the breadth of women's experiences without always placing them in opposition to men. Preserved within such oppositional thinking are the very foundations of patriarchal discourse, which clearly cannot hope to be dismantled in this way. Lamentably, as Christina Crosby succinctly points out, 'the inclusiveness of the "Manifesto" tends to juxtapose theoretical positions rather than make the connections Haraway recognises are so necessary'.[69]

Within cyborg narratives also, despite some interesting exceptions, the reinforcal of traditional gender roles remains marked, particularly with regard to female depictions. While progressive possibilities can be glimpsed in reading the female cyborg's appearance and behaviour as a 'masquerade' of femininity, exposing its artificial nature for what it is, what remains problematic is the lack of alternative roles envisaged. Ultimately, the social position and experience of real women throughout the world needs to be adequately addressed before technology's place in our lives can be celebrated or otherwise. As Halberstam reminds us, 'although the female cyborg proves to be a fascinating metaphor and an exciting prospect it may gloss or obscure certain relations between living women and technology'.[70] At a time when even the term 'woman' became increasingly problematic, Haraway's cyborg stepped into the breach within feminist debate, offering a new means of classification within identity politics, yet one that is similarly laden with paradoxes, inconsistencies and worrying generalisations. Above all, despite declaring the possibility of 'a monstrous world without gender',[71] Haraway fails to suggest how this can be achieved, particularly when affiliations between men and women are so negated, and despite affirming the need to make a 'partial connection with others'.[72]

A means by which male and female subjectivity is not predicated on oppositions still seems impossible, and if technology can contribute to such a possibility it is not by transcending gender *per se*, but through providing a mutual arena for debate, communication and experimentation. Cinema is one such arena yet we clearly need a wider range of images than those currently being produced, together

with readings that permit greater diversity also, in which women with agency are not immediately regarded as 'phallic' impostors but as valid protagonists in their own right, while evidence of emotional sensitivity displayed by male characters, far from being derided or regarded with suspicion, is perceived instead as an important step in moving beyond outmoded archetypes.

It remains to be seen whether gender divisions can ever be completely abandoned, either in cinema or wider society, yet while masculinity is gradually being recognised as a multiple rather than singular identity, there are evident problems in admitting that the same is true of femininity. For the most part, even in SF, certain borders are still ruthlessly patrolled, particularly where the synthetic female is concerned.

Eve of Destruction (Gibbins, 1991) has garnered the attention of a number of female critics, perhaps because it features a rare female scientist, Dr Eve Simmons (Renee Soutendijk) as its cyborg creator. This does not absolve the film from evident problems, however, particularly as the supposed rationality implied by her profession is undermined by the apparent 'hysteria' and unreliability of the female psyche, with Simmons being shown to have experienced past abuse and to have unconsciously passed her consequent 'neurosis' of men onto her cyborg daughter/double. Military cyborg, Eve VIII (also Soutendijk), is designed as a weapon, with a nuclear bomb where her uterus should be, yet she goes on a violent rampage that simulates rape-revenge narratives, first seducing, then eliminating, the men she encounters. Such transgression is decisively punished when she is finally destroyed by her mother/creator, who realises that her own latent rage is being manifested by this alter ego and that this ultimately poses a danger to her young son.

Plant states of the ending that 'the convergence of machine and the repressed unconscious of women make a threatening alliance. The message is that it's all best left to the boys.'[73] Yet the 'faulty input' scenario of the film equally suggests that both men and women have the potential to create monsters. Indeed, various cinematic critiques against the creation of military cyborgs would refute the claim that 'boys' are any better at managing technology responsibly, suggesting instead that the dream of the perfect soldier, cop or killing machine is as riddled with unease as that of the perfect woman.

It is because Eve VIII poses a threat to patriarchy that she cannot be permitted to survive, yet her creator's complicity in her death is also notable because it is portrayed as a sign of her own psychological maturity. One of cinema's only examples of a female-created synthetic woman is thus effectively terminated (once again) because her existence is deemed to be illegitimate, her damaging 'neurosis' offering further proof of women's supposedly intrinsic irrationality.

A recent review of *Terminator 3* perceives interesting similarities, arguing that there is 'an undertow of feminist retribution in *T3* the likes of which sci-fi hasn't seen since *Eve of Destruction*, also featuring a female robot mad at men and the world they made'.[74] However, it is difficult to make any feminist claims in either case when the cyborgs involved are each effectively obliterated, particularly

when overt lengths are gone to in order to diminish any audience sympathy. The absurdly titled 'terminatrix' of *T3* may be portrayed with camp humour, inflating her breasts to deal with a traffic cop, yet she is also demonised in order to prove how explicitly *unfeminine* she is. The film exaggerates femme fatale clichés, even in her guise as an 'evil nurse', showing the T-X mercilessly killing children and staring dispassionately as an injured woman begs her for help. In fact, she not only proves the accuracy of Andreas Huyssen's reading of the female machine as vamp,[75] she is explicitly vampiric also, tasting her victim's blood to confirm that she has her intended prey. While the film may try to obscure its intent by stating just how powerful women will become in the future, not only by reproducing another generation of fighters, but in taking command positions alongside men, they are still determined by the same narrow field of inquiry: are they potentially good mothers and supportive partners to men (like John Connor's intended wife, Katherine Brewster), or are they blood-sucking, merciless and inhuman? Indeed, *T3* seems to support Springer's contention that a covert fear of females is aligned with a technological threat in the cyborg film, reiterating as it does the same logic of domestication or obliteration noted elsewhere with regard to synthetic females.

Despite attempts to reclaim such figures, cinematic cyborgs fail to be genuinely subversive because rather than displace the 'hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities' noted by Haraway in terms of literary cyborgs, they help to maintain these categories instead, aided in turn by regressive theoretical interpretations. The cyborg's ability to transcend gender has thus proved to be largely ineffectual within SF cinema, yet in its exaggerated depiction of male and female roles it has nevertheless provided the opportunity by which to question whether they are truly as 'natural' as has traditionally been perceived.

In being defined through excessive musculature and a tendency towards violence, male cyborgs have been as equally stereotyped as their female counterparts, yet they have also shown themselves to be more capable of revision, as was proven by the new roles that appeared in the 1990s, with cyborgs adopting caring paternal roles, exhibiting a sense of vulnerability and forging progressive alliances with female characters that may all be interpreted as articulating the possibilities of gender revision – and which is further explored in Chapter 6. The humanisation of these characters, and their adoption of 'feminine' traits such as nurturing and empathy can be ambiguously read but does at least suggest that traditional gender roles may be transcended, that certain characteristics are not intrinsic to one sex alone, and that men and women have the potential to work together, in fiction at least, in order to create a better world.

The possibility of forging any such alliances in the real world is still severely neglected within the majority of feminist discourse, which insists on maintaining oppositions at seemingly all cost and is itself riddled with internal dissension. Nevertheless, discerning shared experiences and addressing mutual problems remains a crucial concern, not only between women, but among us all, and clearly we must continue to imagine new incarnations and identities that will better represent the plurality of subjectivities experienced today. Using the term

'cyborg' in exchange for women will not automatically create affiliations, as Haraway had assumed, and cyborg status is, in any case, too ambiguous to offer any single interpretation. However, it does offer a means of articulating the extent to which all gender identity, both male and female, is equally manufactured, shaped in part by the socialising agencies that surround us, yet also capable of being altered and 'reprogrammed' in a multiplicity of ways.

5

The Best of Both Worlds? Hybridity, Humanity and the Other

Just as the cyborg has proved useful in questioning ideas surrounding class identity and gender construction, any attempt to consign it to a particular race, nationality or species throws up equally problematic concerns regarding the pertinence of such definitions and the criteria on which they are based. This chapter uses examples from recent films to both illustrate and interrogate the tenets of postcolonial discourse, focusing on the efforts made by artificial and partial humans to gain acceptance from humans, and questioning how contemporary debates surrounding cultural identity and alterity – the term used to denote difference – are reflected in such narratives. A fundamental aim is to assess how the conferring of human status is a culturally loaded notion, one that cannot be divorced from relations of power, and to evaluate the extent to which such status is ever achieved by the cyborgs, sentient machines, and other hybrid figures chosen for discussion.

In a narrative sense, these fictional figures have tended to be placed in either of two categories – crudely conceived as either 'allies' or 'enemies' – with each group viewed as either innocent and in need of instruction, or manifestly dangerous and, for the most part, destroyed. The same option of 'domestication or obliteration' was shown to operate with regard to cinema's synthetic females, as discussed in Chapter 4, yet it also has been used as a means of evaluating and controlling various subjects throughout history. Imperialism has traditionally legitimated itself through utilising a set of oppositions, with 'humanity' treated as an exclusive preserve by which to differentiate 'Others'. Postcolonial theory has sought to investigate such strategies, examining how certain distinctions of race, cultural values and ideals have dominated others, with a focus on how Western rule has been preserved, yet a number of assumptions have also been made that demand closer analysis. A key problem with any discussion of race and nationality, as Edward Said has acknowledged, is that of perpetuating a dualistic evaluation of people, for as he argues: 'the difficulty with theories of essentialism and exclusiveness, or with barriers and sides, is that they give rise to polarizations that absolve and forgive ignorance and demagogy more than they enable knowledge'.[1] The chapter asks how differences can be discussed without falling prey to simplistic distinctions, and questions whether any attempt to perceive a commonality between peoples is at all possible, in postcolonial rhetoric or beyond.

Because it is fundamentally 'impure', neither simply human nor machine, the cyborg confounds the notion of biological essence or racial purity. It is also because of their mixed origins, and the way in which they problematise discrete divisions, that artificial or partial humans provide a means by which to evaluate 'hybridity' – another strongly contested term within cultural theory. As a state of mind, as much as an indeterminate cultural position, hybridity has been championed as a form of resistance by critics such as Homi K. Bhabha, who has argued that non-Western migrants – collectively termed in postcolonial rhetoric as the 'diaspora' – are better able to question the ideals of their 'host' culture because they have another point of reference.[2] In other words, the duality of their origins provides the best of both worlds in terms of values and identity. Whether such a contention is true is a question that is articulated here, using examples that emphasise how subjectivity and status are always contingent, with conflict and compromise frequently in evidence.

An accompanying aim is to question the anxieties that cyborgs can be seen to reflect, asking whether their transgression of boundaries might be equated with fears of racial indeterminacy and the unease clustering around such concepts as purity, contamination and fears of 'passing'. Particular reference is made to the sentient android, Data, in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, alongside a detailed analysis of *Star Trek X: Nemesis* (Baird, 2002), which not only demonstrates the limits of Data's acceptance among humans, but also provides a means to discuss another techno-organic variant of the cyborg, the clone. Such figures broach questions of authenticity and impurity, as well as querying how developments in bio-genetic engineering may affect the construction and categorisation of humans. The chapter finally considers the grounds upon which this distinction is based – in both cinema and postcolonial theory – and asks whether hybridity provides a tenable strategy by which to re-think identity.

The term 'hybridity' has had multiple interpretations in critical theory, having been used to describe various cross-cultural influences occurring in the world as well as providing a reassessment of subjectivity – all of which have proved to be equally contentious. Originating in botany and zoology in reference to the cross-fertilisation or 'inter-breeding' of two species of plant or animal, its application to humans has consequently proved to be controversial in seeming to confirm the idea that there are fundamental distinctions between people – with an implication that these should not be traversed. In this sense, as Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes have put it 'hybridity signals the threat of "contamination" to those who espouse an essentialist notion of pure and authentic origins'.[3] Yet hybridity has acquired significance beyond the realm of reproduction, and has notably been employed by postcolonial critics as a means of describing a specific realm of experience. As N. Katherine Hayles points out, postcolonial theorists have tended to take issue 'not only with the universality of the (white male) liberal subject but also with the very idea of a unified, consistent identity, focusing instead on hybridity'.[4] The term is thus used to emphasise the fragmented nature of subjectivity, particularly among diasporic communities attempting to retain their own values and beliefs within a dominant culture – a situation that is just as likely to

yield conflict and uncertainty as the joint pleasures that some critics have attested to. Subjects with a 'mixed parentage' compound this experience still further for while some claim to have benefited from the combined influence of their origins, others have attested to experiencing rejection from both communities, indicating that miscegenation remains a potent taboo among various groups.[5]

Cyborgs are the progeny of a similarly dual heritage, yet are routinely tested in cinematic narratives and asked to prove their allegiance to 'humanity' by articulating specific ideals, thereby demonstrating how differences are both psychologically and socially mediated. The cyborg's technological components also provide an apt means by which to address how science has shaped our understanding of racial identity. As Brah and Coombes point out, science has not only been used to categorise specific differences but to legitimate particular forms of domination also, asserting that 'the scientific taxonomies through which human variation has been constructed' have also become 'a signifier of inherent and immutable "difference". In these cases science can become an alibi for legitimizing processes of inferiorization, exclusion, subordination and inequality.'[6] The point is an important one, reminding us that 'as a cultural discourse, science is far short of being "neutral" and is deeply marked by power relations'.[7] The fact that a hierarchy of race was constructed via scientific discourse, and that definitions of humanity once excluded certain peoples, clearly testifies to this power. Yet hybridity has also been used as a means of defying past attempts at exclusion, as the work of W.E.B. DuBois at the turn of the nineteenth century has shown.

In attempting to disprove the 'fixity' of race DuBois provided evidence of interracial relationships, which had severe ramifications for any notion of biological purity and attendant rights. As Evelynn M. Hammonds notes 'the existence of mixed bodies – the miscegenated – while an "open secret," was denied by whites because the admission of such would implicitly acknowledge the humanity of African Americans and the denial of citizenship to them'.[8] The fact of hybridity, in this respect, was used to refute the very grounds upon which certain people were effectively dehumanised. The interpretation of race as a biological category has since courted considerable controversy, with morphological differences in skin and eye colour, hair and facial features no longer serving as stable markers of race, yet ethnic categories remain in use nevertheless, signalling a reluctance to abandon such classification systems. Hybridity may have forced some recognition of mutuality (alongside decades of protest and civil action) yet it has also raised numerous anxieties around this indeterminate status and, despite evidence to the contrary, the concept of 'purity' still exists.

It is interesting to note in this regard that amid the hopes placed upon genetic research there have also been attendant concerns that the focus placed on identification and categorisation simply extends the project of racial taxonomies under the guise of scientific curiosity. This distrust is rooted in the fact that genetic theories and practices have past associations with a desire for purification – culminating in attempts to rid the human race of 'undesirable' elements, and as Deborah Lynn Steinberg has queried: 'Can there be a genetics divorced from its own history?'[9] Related concerns surrounding increased technological control over reproduction

are similarly infused with a dubious history of social engineering, and the relative recency of 'ethnic cleansing' in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda reveals the extent to which perceived differences, and the divisions they cause, run deep.

Such factors invite us to question how ingrained racial differentiation is, and to ask what hope exists in establishing a unified subjectivity. The very notion of an intrinsic quality deemed as human has often been vilified as a means of reinforcing white Western dominance throughout the world, yet this assumption warrants greater scrutiny. Is humanism a totalising discourse that attempts to evade national, historical and cultural differences? Is it irredeemably aligned to the Western Enlightenment project, linking progress with scientific rationality, and invariably used to divide and conquer different peoples? The majority of postcolonial theory assumes so, yet in arguing that specific ethnicities and nationalities are a crucial marker of identity theorists have also opened themselves to accusations of essentialism. Ultimately, both humanist ideals and postcolonial theory each demand closer examination on the issue of whether a comprehensive and inclusive mode of identity is possible, or if this concept is as regressive and hegemonic as has so often been claimed in recent cultural studies and identity politics.

In what he terms as the present 'postcolonial era', Graham Murdock contends that exile, migration and resettlement have made 'multiculturalism a key issue for a growing number of societies' – which he argues is not adequately discussed from the perspective of those experiencing such events.[10] It is this problem of reification – speaking on behalf of a chosen group – that led Gayatri Spivak to write her famous essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985), claiming that the experiences of subaltern subjects – those who are subordinated within a given culture – are simply co-opted by academics.[11] Yet Spivak and the majority of other postcolonial theorists might be found equally guilty of this problem, as Arif Dirlik suggests in stating that postcolonial discourse announces the extent to which 'Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe.'[12] Clearly, the very tenets of the theory – and any attempt to understand how differing cultural identities are experienced by people – are fraught with difficulty, particularly given the tendency to make assumptions on their behalf.

Theoretical attempts to use the cyborg in reference to such experiences have been equally problematic, as is proven by Haraway's description of women working in Third World electronics industries as 'unnatural cyborg women'[13] – a claim which has been criticised for dehumanising such subjects and even celebrating the exploitative conditions in which they work. Sandoval has additionally objected to the use of a Western term to describe such women, contending that Haraway simply relabels 'US Third World feminist criticism' as 'cyborg feminism'.[14] Haraway has been taken to task by other critics for suggesting that 'women of colour' have privileged cyborg status, for as Joan W. Scott has queried, 'why are Southeast Asian women "real-life" cyborgs?'[15] while Sharona Ben-Tov deems Haraway guilty of 'imposing the cyborg myth on people who might have oppositional strategies of their own, drawn from their own cultural resources'.[16] Admitting to these problems in a later interview, Haraway has stated that if she were to rewrite the Manifesto she would 'be much more careful about describing who counts as "we"

in the statement "we are all cyborgs"',[17] opting to redefine the cyborg as 'non-original people who are multiply displaced' and speculating instead on the need for a 'family of figures who would populate our imagination of these post-colonial postmodern worlds that would not be quite as imperializing in terms of a single figuration of identity'.[18]

What such an admission proves is the difficulty in using any single image as a metaphor of contemporary identity – even one that has the potential to occupy a number of subject positions. It also reveals the level of academic in-fighting that exists today, and the difficulties that emerge when origins are brought into question. The cyborg's greatest value, in Haraway's view, is that it has no 'origin story' and thereby evades the dualisms through which Western epistemologies have been constructed.[19] Within cinematic representations however, cyborgs test the boundaries of permissible difference. In fact, such narratives organise artificial and partial humans into categories of inclusion and exclusion, inviting tacit acceptance where the figure in question reflects due deference to human values, and outright hostility when found to be a threat. Murphy's gradual re-discovery of his humanity in the *RoboCop* films, and the T-800's increasing ability to understand and work alongside them in *Terminator 2* and *3* may thus be read, from a postcolonial perspective, as strategies of assimilation designed to recuperate difference and the ideological threat it poses.

Cyborgs that oppose humanity, and which cannot be redeemed in this way, are swiftly dispatched, such as Cain (Tom Noonan) in *RoboCop 2*, the T-1000 (Robert Patrick) of *T2*, or the T-X of *T3*. By failing to defer to humanity's alleged superiority, they are excluded from the moral framework that governs such films and summarily executed. Yet cyborg cinema's demarcation between the acceptable and the abject also rests on a fundamental idealisation of what makes us human, even nominally so. A conceit is readily apparent in which only positive traits are claimed as human, such as compassion and tolerance, while negative characteristics such as aggression and megalomania are typically displaced onto a convenient Other – a strategy that has been linked to historical processes of subjugation. Still more interesting are the values that tend to be promoted, for alongside displaying necessary respect for humans there is an attendant requirement to adopt a given belief system and accompanying behavioural codes. This can be seen to reflect the experience of migrant subjects who are similarly required to fit into their 'host' culture or risk (potentially hostile) rejection. Yet although acceptance requires assimilation, or what Homi K. Bhabha refers to as 'mimicry', this must be moderated so that, in his words, the subject is 'almost the same, but not quite', demonstrating the frustrating position in which conformity is counterbalanced by the need to remain acceptably different.[20]

There is a degree when imitation is too close for comfort in cyborg fictions also, chiefly because this threatens the integrity and uniqueness of humans. In this sense fear of miscegenation, and the possibility of other ethnic groups 'passing' as white, can be interpreted as analogous to the narrative theme in which machines can no longer be distinguished from humans. The integral difference of grooved fingers among *Westworld*'s androids, the lack of a 'blush response' exhibited by

Blade Runner's replicants, are devices that explore an underlying anxiety: what if the gap between 'us' and 'other' narrows? What if we can no longer tell each other apart? In many ways this concern is what Descartes explored in the eighteenth century, when increasingly lifelike automata appeared in society, and what Freud described as the 'uncanny'. Verisimilitude threatens the concept of human uniqueness while additionally unsettling the foundations upon which our alleged superiority rests. SF narratives have extrapolated such fears by providing a host of creatures able to mimic human appearance in ever more accurate ways. As Kyle Reece (Michael Biehn) warns in *The Terminator*, infiltration units such as the T-800 are infinitely more frightening than previous models not only because of their lifelike skin, but also because they have 'sweat, bad breath, everything – very hard to spot'. They are designed specifically to 'pass' undetected among humans, with successive models that are even capable of altering their appearance to imitate people, thus upsetting the integrity of the individual still further. Such films take pleasure in stripping these entities of their synthetic skin and showing that they are not what they seem, and even the reformed T-800 of *Terminator 2* and *3* must ultimately 'die' – as if he were also too close for comfort.

The need to make and maintain divisions is thus marked within the cyborg film, yet there is also a conflicting desire to establish a sense of familiarity by exhibiting known behaviour. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a theme that has emerged from Hollywood, cyborgs also tend to reflect specifically American ideals. The cyborg child in *D.A.R.Y.L* (Wincer, 1985), played by Barret Oliver, excels at baseball, as well as making money, in order to please his adopted human parents. The sentient robot previously known as Number 5 in *Short Circuit* (Badham, 1986) is similarly childlike and eager to fit in, changing his name to Johnny and imitating American icons such as John Wayne. In *Short Circuit 2* (Kenneth Johnson, 1988) Johnny embarks on a journey of self-discovery alongside Indian scientist Ben Jabituya (Fisher Stevens), whose presence in both films serves to make Johnny more 'human' – particularly given the strange speech codes used by the scientist. Although Johnny is essentially a machine, with a limited command of English, he picks up new input fast and seems to assimilate more quickly than the man who built him. He even asks at one point where Ben comes from, thus recognising the scientist's 'difference', even in multicultural New York. Both are positioned as innocents abroad who are taken advantage of in the big city by deceitful humans, yet while Johnny's feelings of loneliness and rejection are indicated, he learns from books and popular culture how to communicate and co-exist with humans. He also helps Ben to establish himself as another displaced alien, enabling him to set up his own business and hook up with a nice American girl, and the film ends with both outsiders pledging their allegiance to the American flag.

In becoming a citizen Johnny proves that he has made the transition from a robot created by the US military to a subject capable of self-determination. Indeed, the sentient robot or cyborg has often been used to test American democratic values. For example, Isaac Asimov's novella, *The Bicentennial Man* (1976), was intended to both question and celebrate the American constitution by examining the degree to which a robot would be afforded the equivalent of human rights. Although

a history of slavery is evoked in its theme of robot emancipation, Asimov also makes the robot in question, Andrew Martin, progressively more human, in physical terms, in order to gain legal status. The equivalent of rights are only acquired by becoming human, and effectively forfeiting his robot origins, for there is no parity of esteem here.

Necessary allies exist, including the human family for whom Martin first works as a servant, yet equally necessary is the money needed to finance both his legal fees and successive operations. Fortunately Martin has a talent for robotics that covers these costs, and in literally becoming a self-made man he proves that in America, with sufficient motivation, anything is possible. Remaining true to this mythology, in the film version of the story, *Bicentennial Man* (Columbus, 1999), Martin ends his days gaining everything he has desired – indicating that his is a rags-to-riches story. Again, the point is to prove that where you come from is no obstacle to achieving your goal, providing that you are willing to work hard and make specific sacrifices. In Martin's case the sacrifice is to exchange the superior resilience of a mechanical body for an organic one and he pursues his dream of becoming human to the extent that he eventually dies (in the film) at precisely the point at which human status is granted. From the outset, Martin recognises humanity as the only goal worth having, even if this ultimately means mortality. There is no kinship with others like himself because he is seemingly alone in having a creative positronic pathway. The question of robot rights (and any link they might have with civil rights) thus becomes evaded. Far from striking a blow for other life-forms to gain equality in their own right, freedom and individuality are equated with being human.[21]

Star Trek: The Next Generation's Data (Brent Spiner) clearly owes a huge debt to this story, not only in having a unique positronic mind, but also in attempting to emulate humans.[22] His origins go some way to explaining this allegiance. Abandoned by his human creator on Omicron Seta 3, Data was discovered and reactivated by Starfleet personnel and has since endeavoured to be like those who 'saved' him. This desire is tested throughout the series by such pursuits as attempting to procreate, to conduct a romance with a human female, even in proving his sentience, yet whatever he tries, like the colonised Indians, V.S. Naipaul, dubbed as 'mimic men' who are 'almost the same but not white',[23] Data never quite makes the grade as a human. In fact he is *too white* – his 'fake' pallor and yellow eyes marking his difference to those around him, along with his too formal speech codes. While clearly more than a machine he is also unable to 'pass' as human, and despite his best efforts to fit in Data remains, as Rhonda Wilcox notes 'forever poised on the margin' of human identity.[24]

This indeterminacy makes him a potent image of hybridity, yet Wilcox asserts that while Data is the 'locus of many issues and themes . . . central is his representation of the oppressed, particularly African Americans',[25] claiming that because he is enslaved in one episode ('The Most Toys'), made to undergo a trial to determine his freedom ('The Measure of a Man'), and threatened with having his child taken from him by Federation authorities ('The Offspring'), his treatment 'resembles that given minorities'.[26] Slavery is clearly the sub-text of her rationale, yet while Wilcox

describes the aspiring android as an 'imitation white human',[27] Daniel Bernardi regards him as a positive black role model, claiming that Data displays admirable traits because he is 'unassuming, yet proud, rational and determined to do what is right, despite all the wrongs that surround him'.[28]

One of the perceived 'wrongs' inferred by Bernardi is the belief that *Star Trek* is a 'neo-colonial text' designed to 'celebrate the hegemony of white evolution'.[29] Aligning the United Federation of Planets with NATO and arguing that, despite any attempts at liberalism, a manifest 'project-in-the-text' is a celebration of 'white-Western' superiority, Bernardi ignores the fact that Data's main goal is to emulate the group he reads as white, oddly claiming him as symbolising 'a starting point on a map to resistance'[30] and indicating in the process that what is regarded as positive, or resistant, or even 'black' for that matter, is not necessarily consistent.

Although a racial analogy remains open, Data is clearly presented as a minority figure whose presence on board the Enterprise, serving alongside other alien(ated) individuals such as Worf (Michael Dorn) – a Klingon raised by human parents – suggests a seeming multiculturalism. Yet as Katrina G. Boyd notes, the consensus projected by Starfleet necessitates that cultural differences are elided by its crew, and Data must therefore 'suppress his difference in order to reach toward the transcendent human ideal', just as Worf must suppress his apparent excess of emotion.[31] Like Andrew Martin, Data relies on the goodwill of liberal humans to secure his rights, particularly when threatened with disassembly, yet Starfleet's subsequent attempt to take his 'daughter', Lal (Hallie Todd), for experimentation proves that his liberty is by no means assured. Lal conveniently dies before Data's freedom to reproduce is decided on, yet the episode reveals that he is not fully trusted. While one Data is a novelty, to have others like him (that he would be responsible for socialising) is clearly viewed as a worrying prospect for Starfleet, even in the mind of his greatest champion, Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart). Why this might be the case, despite Data's clear devotion to duty, can only be explained by his difference, which continues to define him, no matter what rank he reaches. Yet because he is seemingly incapable of emotion, Data displays no bitterness towards the authorities at his daughter's demise, or their earlier plans to disassemble him, remaining reassuringly devoid of such potentially problematic feelings.

In fact it is an apparent absence of emotion that makes him so endearing, and when Data is shown to betray the principles of his adopted community in 'Descent' it is emotions that are blamed, as well as contact with his own 'kind'. In contrast to Data's deference to humans, his android predecessor Lore feels nothing but contempt and is thus figured as 'evil' – particularly when he hatches a fascistic plan to obliterate humanity. He even enlists Data's assistance in this endeavour, using an 'emotion chip' to encourage precisely those feelings that might have threatened his position on the Enterprise. Once filled with hatred towards humans, and bitterness over the way he has been treated, we see another side to Data, exemplifying the duality of colonised subjects who are not only 'domesticated, harmless, knowable but also *at the same time* wild, harmful, mysterious'.[32] When an appeal is made by Picard to his former allegiance, Data coldly retorts: 'I am not your puppet any more.' Such nascent independence is short-lived

however, and when Data's ethical sub-routine is re-booted he proves his loyalty to human values by ending his brother's life at the conclusion of the episode.

Nevertheless, and despite acting as a model officer for the majority of his seven-year run in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, Data's ambivalence continues to be refrained in the series' excursions to the big screen in order to exploit the question of his tenuous allegiance. In *Star Trek VII: Generations* (David Carson, 1994) he experiments with an emotion chip again, yet this time with the approval of Starfleet, indicating the extent to which his development is overseen by this organisation. The ensuing turmoil experienced causes him to beg to have it deactivated yet this is refused by Picard, who argues that being human necessitates having to deal with uncomfortable emotions. However, this stance is removed by *Star Trek VIII: First Contact* (Frakes, 1996) when, having confessed to feeling fear at the prospect of re-encountering the cyborg race known as the Borg, Data is advised by his Captain to deactivate the chip, murmuring wistfully 'sometimes I envy you, Data'. It is an uncharacteristic admission yet, as we shall see, the Borg elicit repressed rage on the Captain's part, causing him to dispatch with the self-control and devotion to duty that have defined his role up until this point. By contrast, although Data is shown to have the best of both worlds in being able to switch emotions on and off at the touch of a button, the chip also enables his later seduction by the Borg Queen (Alice Krige), compounding the idea that emotions are potentially corrupting.

As Roberta E. Pearson and Maire Messenger-Davies have stated, the transition of the show to cinema entails necessary compromises in which '*Trek* producers must not only provide spectacle, they must match this spectacle by "turning up the volume" on the characters, while at the same time maintaining consistency with the characters' previously established traits and backstory'.[33] Accordingly, a sub-text of *First Contact*'s narrative is exploring Data's potential to defect again by placing him with other semi-mechanoid beings. In trying to elicit his co-operation, the Borg Queen literally tempts him with flesh, having organic skin grafted to his body and reactivating his chip. Claiming to help Data secure his ambition of becoming human, she equates his goal of self-improvement to that of the Borg. His response is to argue that the Borg are anathema to the finer human values he aspires to, asserting that Borg rule is essentially coercive and thus revealing his own naïvety in the esteem with which human ideals and organisations are held.

Queen: You are in chaos, Data. You are the contradiction. A machine who wants to be human.

Data: Since you seem to know so much about me you must be aware that I am programmed to evolve, to better myself.

Queen: We too are on a quest to better ourselves, evolving toward a state of perfection.

Data: Forgive me, but the Borg do not evolve, they conquer.

Queen: By assimilating other beings into our collective we are bringing them closer to perfection.

Data: Somehow I question your motives.

The fact that Data does not question the Federation's motives is evidence of the degree to which he has assimilated both their goals and accompanying self-justification, yet the above exchange also questions the difference between each value-system. The next scene extends this issue with Picard describing humans of the twenty-fourth century as no longer motivated by the acquisition of wealth, stating 'we work to better ourselves, and the rest of humanity'.

This is a familiar claim as, time and again, we are informed that humanity has evolved beyond its primitive stage in *Star Trek*, with its involvement in the Federation serving as proof of this advancement. Anxious to extricate itself from imperialist concerns, Starfleet's mission is explained as exploration in the pursuit of knowledge, and although new territory and colonies are additionally achieved all are claimed to further democratic principles rather than material gain. Nonetheless, while the Federation prides itself on being an alliance of elective planets, closer scrutiny reveals this to be a vain idea. Within the context of a pan-galactic struggle for power among competing empires any notion of self-determination is dubious in itself, as the new worlds and civilisations encountered by Starfleet and subsequently enlisted into the Federation must each compromise their independence in order to survive. Joining the Federation can also be likened to assimilation in terms of the rules that must be adhered to, the eradication of difference and the acquisition of territory that results.

This can be approximated with a project of 'acculturation' – described by Jo Labanyi as a 'process through which the dominant culture procures social "improvement" through the assimilation of subaltern cultural forms',[34] which makes the Federation sound little different to the Borg – who have similarly taken the attributes of other races and incorporated them as their own. Indeed, the very term 'assimilation' – used by the Borg to describe the process of absorbing the cultural and biological traits of other species – is more commonly associated with the efforts 'immigrants' must go to in order to be accepted within their adopted nation, implying an awareness of postcolonial issues. Moreover, the Borg undermine the Federation's purportedly democratic principles, for while they appear to mimic the behaviour and ideology of the Federation – the very quality that *Star Trek* tends to demand of all approved species – they are too uncanny, and too negative, in the traits reflected.

Implicitly suggested, from their introduction, is the idea that the Borg are humanity's future, yet they also stem from a legacy of techno-organic beings in SF – from H.G. Wells Martian invaders in *War of the Worlds* (1897) to *Dr Who*'s cybermen – offering a disconcerting projection of human potential based on an unsavoury past.[35] Like their thematic predecessors, the Borg's fusion with technology articulates the extent to which they have become dehumanised in their endeavour to conquer other peoples and lay claim to their land. Yet although the Borg are colonisers they are also colonised figures whose uniform appearance, pallid skin-tones, and monotonous speech-codes reveal the ultimate cost of consensus: for all the diversity of their disparate backgrounds they look, talk and behave exactly alike. Emptied of racial or national distinction they might even be read as a parody of *Star Trek*'s liberal ideals, particularly in its representation of Starfleet,

for crew-members similarly become absorbed into the 'dominant culture' on board, abandoning where they come from in order to build a better future.[36] For all their apparent multiculturalism, the Enterprise crew's devotion to duty and shared ideology supersedes any national or racial differences, and just as the Borg remain recognisably humanoid in appearance, despite the vast array of species they have assimilated, so the governing hierarchy on board the Enterprise is fundamentally human also.

Some theorists have even perceived the Borg as a more progressive organisation, with Bernardi describing this hybrid species as 'a multicultural mass that threatens the humanistic world of the democratic Federation and its all-too-white heroes'.[37] There are ample problems with this argument, not least because it ignores non-white 'heroes' working for the Federation, but because the equation of humanity and 'whiteness' is highly questionable, seeming to map racist assumptions onto the text. More accurate is Robin Roberts' assertion that, rather than simply legitimate colonialism – or white supremacy, as Bernardi implies – *Star Trek* creates parallels with subordinated groups as a means of 'enabling viewers to see the ways in which systems of domination are perpetuated'.[38] The Borg not only represent cultural domination as oppressive, but also afford a critique of the Federation as being fundamentally no different in demanding that any sign of difference is relinquished for a common purpose.

Data must also conform to this principle and defer to human values in an attempt to belong, yet despite his rank he is not subject to the same level of respect given to others. For example, when he encounters his creator/father, Dr Noonian Soong (Brent Spiner), in the episode 'Family', Data is ordered to return to the Enterprise while the old man lies dying. Would any human, or any another species for that matter, be treated in the same way? Because he is perceived to have no emotion, because he is mainly represented as a comic character, and because Data bears the treatment he is given with such good humour, discrepancies may not be immediately apparent yet are discernible nevertheless. The goal of becoming human would seem to be motivated by the belief that once he has done so inequalities will be a thing of the past, yet no shortcuts are allowed in this quest and just as he once rejected an offer from the godlike Q (John de Lancie) to be made human, so the Borg Queen's seduction in *First Contact* forms another test of his virtue.

By the end of the film Data proves how close he has come to acquiring human traits, especially deceit, for having fooled the queen into thinking he is on her side, he kills her, just as he had killed Lore, thus proving his commitment to humans above that of any life-forms that might seem (physiologically) closer. Yet despite such patent demonstrations of his loyalty, it must seemingly be proven again and again. When Data 'malfunctions' at the beginning of *Star Trek IX: Insurrection* (Jonathan Frakes, 1998), the film shows that he has to be constantly monitored, yet reveals that the same is true of the Federation also. A covert observation post accidentally exposed by Data reveals this organisation in their most negative light yet, having joined forces with another species in attempting to appropriate a desirable new world. Proving that they are not as dissimilar to the Borg as Data had believed,

particularly in terms of territorial acquisition, Federation technology is intended to disperse the planet's inhabitants onto a replica holodeck in order to take possession of their resources.

An implicit critique is thus made of Federation power, as well as their potential for corruption, yet like the episodes it draws upon, 'Who Watches the Watchers?' and 'Journeys End' – which criticise colonial practices such as the surveillance of developing nations and enforced repatriation – *Insurrection* may provide a critique of the Federation simply to appear open and objective. This complies with a rhetoric of transparency that is essential to removing scrutiny from any given ideology, delimiting further inquiry by anticipating and containing opposition. As Kent A. Ono has put it 'for the legitimacy of colonialism and imperialism to persist, they must be continually questioned',[39] implying that any critique offered is motivated by self-justification. While this aim may not be as intentional as Ono claims, it remains the case that just as negative traits are carefully screened out of humanity and displaced onto other species, the less appealing aspects of Federation authority are also presented as outside the norm in order to present an image of a benign agency working in the interests of global democracy. If the franchise questions this authority at times, it also needs to support it, and while insurrection is allowed in this case it also works to strengthen the presumed integrity of the governing value-system.

Ultimately, thanks to Data's mishap and the Enterprise crew's intervention, the So'na get to keep their home while faith is re-established in Starfleet's intrinsic goodness. As with Data's malfunction, the Federation's alliance with the acquisitive Ba'ku is seen to be a temporary 'glitch' in the otherwise orderly universe that *Star Trek* shores up. Yet a final plot twist unsettles this sense of order when the Ba'ku are revealed to be the offspring of the peaceful So'na – a fact that is shocking not only because of the extreme dissimilarity of their appearance but the conflicting values of each group, inviting us to question the differences between other supposedly disparate groups in *Star Trek*'s ideology.

Just as the Borg can be viewed as a reflection of humanity's more negative characteristics, so numerous species in *Star Trek* take on this burden in order to leave humans artificially cleansed of undesirable features. Thus the Ferengi's greed, the Cardassian's ruthless militarism, and the Founders' stealth are traits which *Star Trek* has managed to breed out of the human race. Even the godlike Q are shown, like other 'superhumans' presented in the series, to be inferior to humanity because they lack compassion. Humans, by contrast, have evolved both morally and technologically into the definitive model for others to follow. This has been viewed as a colonial tactic because humanity, represented by the Federation and its operatives, is situated on the side of 'civilisation' and 'normality' (even 'whiteness' in Bernardi's rationale), while other species are given traits regarded as 'primitive' or 'deviant' – yet these assumed polarities are subverted with the Borg, who offer a discomfiting parallel and question how tenuous human superiority actually is.

Herein lies a progressive use of hybridity as a refusal to be consigned to easily delineated oppositions. By suggesting that seemingly disparate beings are basically the same, previously held distinctions are confounded and a new mode of

interrogation allowed, with contrasting aspects of human nature extrapolated onto imaginary species, only to be reunited. In presenting the antagonism between the So'na and Ba'ku, yet revealing each 'race' to be more alike than they appear, *Insurrection* challenges colonial interpretations of the show. It also revises a theme that has been integral to the franchise from its beginning and which would be used to end its final big screen excursion.

Throughout its history *Star Trek* has played with the theme of doubling, using alter egos and parallel universes not only as a means of generating drama, but also to question human nature – the overarching 'mission' of the franchise. The last film made with the *Next Generation* crew, and allegedly the last cinematic foray planned, *Star Trek X: Nemesis* (Baird, 2002), provides the ultimate test case in questioning human identity, utilising two characters that are not quite human to do so.

The film opens with a wedding between long-term lovers Will Riker (Jonathan Frakes) and Deanna Troy (Marina Sirtis), neatly resolving their protracted romance. This additionally provides Captain Picard with the opportunity to deliver a best-man speech in which Data is ridiculed, yet again, not only for his exacting attention to detail, but also his lack of understanding. Describing his new 'number one' as a 'tyrannical martinet' who will never allow his Captain to go on away missions is a joke that is clearly lost on Data, who responds by quoting Starfleet regulations and is promptly told to 'shut up' – earning rapturous laughter from the assembled crowd. For all his years among humans, and the vast array of knowledge stored within his mind, the joke is still on Data as someone who fails to know appropriate etiquette at such a function and who is clearly at a loss. Excruciatingly, he looks around in confusion as the crew laugh at him with affectionate amusement and we are given to understand that nothing has changed in his status and that his desire to be accepted by humans seems no more advanced.

However, this opening scene and its derisory treatment of Data will be subverted by the end of the film when he proves just how much he has learnt after all. Data becomes contrasted with the 'nemesis' of the title, Picard's clone, Shinzon (Tom Hardy), who provides another example of hybridity in his ambivalent status. Despite deriving from the same genetic material as the human par excellence of the series, Jean-Luc Picard, Shinzon is presented as the antithesis of 'humanity' because of his values. He is cunning, ruthless and without moral integrity – proof positive that environment is more important than biology in determining individual traits. Just as the episode 'Tapestry' reveals that Picard would have been a lowly member of the crew, given a deviation in his history, Shinzon proves that without the same background he cannot be the same man.

Shinzon also demonstrates how *Star Trek* has traded on specific clichés in assessing the moral worth of individuals, thus making its assimilationist goals manifest. Sounding for all the world like Data, he tries to convince Picard that his dearest wish is to emulate the quest of the entire franchise, stating ardently 'I want to learn what it means to be human!' This desire is given added poignancy because, up until this point, he has had no contact with the race to which he (genetically) belongs, yet this aim is shown to be a deception as the plot reveals that Shinzon

not only hates humans but also wishes to destroy them, his formative years having irredeemably tainted him. Cloned by Romulans in a plot to replace Picard, when the plan was abandoned by a new government, Shinzon was rejected also, consigned as a child to live among the enslaved underclass of Remuns in a subterranean work-camp where, as he says, he was 'condemned to an existence of unceasing labour and starvation'. Yet Shinzon's bitterness is not directed towards those that put him there, but against a race he has never known: humans.

This is explained by Riker as a military strategy: 'destroy humanity and you cripple the Federation' – thus providing a rare admission that, far from being a democratic alliance of species, humans actually dominate this organisation. It also serves the ulterior motive of proving that Shinzon is not what he seems. Although biologically human, both psychologically and culturally Shinzon is presented as an alien whose threat is made evident in planning to destroy the entire human race by spreading deadly radiation from his ship. Such an outlandish plot is typical of the *Star Trek* film's need for added drama, while also proving the extent to which Shinzon, and the group he represents, differ to humans. Yet the lengths the film goes to in order to demonise Shinzon also underlines the question he claims to seek: showing what it means to be human by articulating, and rejecting, what it is not.

The celebration of specific virtues and transposition of negative traits onto other species can be equated with Said's opposition between the 'Oriental' and the 'Occidental' – as outlined in *Orientalism* (1978). Within this founding text of post-colonial theory, Said explains how 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience', arguing that 'European culture gained in strength and identity by selling itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate or even underground self.'[40] As we have seen, *Star Trek* also constructs a set of oppositions, artificially improving humans by contrasting them against an alien Other. An oft-repeated motif has been the mirror universe, the polarised class system, and the split self or alter ego – often viewing two groups or sides as engaged in a symbiotic relationship, where one cannot exist without the other. In the same sense that Said talks of the Oriental as being a Western construct who is 'obliterated as a human being',[41] human ideals cannot exist without their negative image, and the 'non-human' exists essentially for this purpose. Yet to equate each side with any actual race is to misunderstand the way this device operates in *Star Trek*, as differing species represent a symbolic articulation of specific *human* traits, designed to foreground the choices available to us as moral beings.

The title, 'Nemesis', plays upon the idea that our true enemy is located within ourselves, the darker side of the human psyche that the franchise hopes we will grow out of. Picard draws attention to this motif during his wedding toast to Riker and Troi, thanking his counsellor by stating: 'you have helped me to recognise the better part of myself'. As the plot will reveal, Shinzon embodies the worst parts, forcing Picard to question whether the values he holds so dear are only afforded by the relative privilege of his own past.

Like Picard, Shinzon is an exemplary leader who has secured an outstanding military reputation. An outcast, living among a people described as an 'undesirable cast in the [Romulan] empire', Shinzon dedicates himself to furthering the cause

of this oppressed group by seeking to take control of the empire. Drawing on the mythic foundations of Rome, and named after the legendary twins Romulus and Remus, the empire is divided into two classes, with Remuns having neither power nor status. In order to make their symbolic position clear they even live on the 'dark side' of their homeworld – a fact that also explains their extreme physiological difference to Romulans (revising the discrepancy between the So'na and Ba'ku seen in *Insurrection*). Exploited as labourers in dilithium mining, weapons construction and, as Picard puts it, 'cannon fodder', they seemingly exemplify a good cause for the Federation's paternalist streak, yet like the brutalised Morloch of Wells' classic novel, *The Time Machine* (1895), the Remuns are extended no sympathy in the narrative, appearing to be too far gone in the deprivations they have experienced to merit any chance of redemption.

As Shinzon states to Picard: 'If you had lived my life, and experienced the suffering of my people, you'd be standing where I am.' Yet Shinzon's potential as a freedom fighter is offset by the villainy of his actions, and a clumsy 'psychic rape' against Troi, assisted by his Remun viceroy, serves – alongside his dastardly plans for Earth – to detract any potential sympathy towards either himself or the cause he is aligned with.[42] While they have clearly been oppressed, banished to an existence that has dramatically altered them, the Remuns are too different in appearance and too vicious in their behaviour to inspire pity. In fact, they serve the function of making the Romulans more sympathetic so that, by the end of the film, a new alliance can be formed with a race previously portrayed as villains.[43] In evincing a repugnance against the Remun plan to kill humans, Romulans prove that they have precisely those ethics that are so absent in this brutalised and dangerous group, and simultaneously absolve themselves of any responsibility in their oppression.

If the Remuns are designed to redress the flaws of the Romulans, Shinzon is similarly juxtaposed against Picard so that the Captain may look all the more heroic. Created as a product of genetic engineering, physically dissimilar to everyone he has grown up with, and both rejected and adopted by conflicting cultural groups, Shinzon amply displays the frustrations of hybridity in terms of his displacement and uncertainty, describing himself as Remun because, as he states: 'I'm not quite human. So what am I? . . . A shadow? An echo?' Indeed, he offers a disconcerting reflection of Picard (and a darker side of humanity) when he states: 'We are a race bred for war and conquest . . . so look in the mirror. See yourself. Consider that, Captain. I can think of no greater torment for you.'

Picard is duly dismayed by the comparison, which subverts the principles by which he has justified his actions, and interestingly, it takes a figure that he has ridiculed, for the most part, to finally reciprocate positions and instruct his mentor. Although Data is derided at the beginning of the film for his lack of understanding, he shows how much attention he has been paying to the value-system inscribed in the franchise, and offers a vital sense of reassurance. Comparing Picard and Shinzon to his own relationship with newfound twin 'brother' B4 – who is a comparable disappointment to him in his relative crudity and untrustworthiness – Data reiterates the extent to which individuality (and, by extension, humanity) is a matter of experience and aspiration.

Data: Although you share the same genetic structure the events of your life have made you unique.
Picard: If I had lived his life, is it possible that I too would have rejected my humanity?
Data: The B4 is physically identical to me – although his neural pathways are not as advanced – but even if they were, he would not be me.
Picard: How can you be sure?
Data: I aspire Sir, to be better than I am. B4 does not. Nor does Shinzon.

Herein lies the humanist imperative that has structured the franchise from its beginning: the idea that humans will evolve (beyond our infancy as Picard puts it) to become a better species. This is the affirmation upon which *Star Trek*'s avowedly utopian universe is founded, the means by which differences are put aside in favour of shared goals, with exploration and the conquest of space becoming metaphors for learning about the human 'condition'. Alter egos exist not only as a warning about what we might become, but also to provide reassurance about humanity's worth. Remuns may have suffered because of an unjust social system but there is seemingly no hope of redemption, no vital core that can be appealed to. Even Shinzon, despite being a clone of Picard, seems to be a lost cause entirely. Inspired by Data's words, Picard attempts to convince him that he too can aspire to be better, stating: 'Your heart, your hands, your eyes are the same as mine. The blood pumping in your veins. The raw material is the same. We have the same potential . . . Buried deep within you, beneath all the years of pain and anger, there is something that has never been nurtured: the potential to be a better man. And that is what it means to be human – to make yourself more than you are.'

Shinzon replies that he cannot fight what he is, which can be read as affirming his belief that they each share the same 'nature' as ruthless warriors, while equally implying that he cannot find the ability within himself to dispense with his chosen course of action – because he simply does not know how to be a better man. Despite sharing so many of Picard's traits his environment and upbringing have irrevocably altered him, precluding any chance for redemption. As is consistent with the logic of 'domestication or obliteration', if assimilation is no longer an option, this only leaves extermination, and it is proof of how threatening Shinzon and his people are that the Romulans defect against them, evincing a new sense of conscience by refusing to allow the wholesale murder of humans, and even fighting to assist their former adversaries. The significance of this gesture even elicits a surprising commendation from Worf – who puts his hatred for these blood enemies of the Klingons aside by stating approvingly of the race that killed his parents: 'the Romulans fought well'.

Ultimately however, the final showdown is between Shinzon and Picard, the Captain of the Enterprise – and symbol of all that is virtuous, educated and decent about humanity – and the man figured as his nemesis. Physically degenerating due to the cloning process (which advances his development at abnormal speed), Shinzon's appearance begins to emulate the race he has identified himself with – which further serves to distance him from any potential audience sympathy. His

only hope for more life is a total blood transfusion from Picard, yet such an exchange would indicate, as he puts it 'the triumph of the echo over the voice' and as this is clearly unacceptable, they must fight to the death.

The opportunity is thus provided for a display of heroism by Picard who confronts Shinzon alone in order to thwart his plans, yet Data also graduates in the film's climax from comic foil to a newfound status as hero. Picard may successfully kill his rival, who seemingly helps to finish himself off, but he appears to be frozen in shock upon doing so. Data arrives in the nick of time and transports his Captain to safety just prior to blowing up the deadly weapon launched by Shinzon. He not only proves his loyalty, but sacrifices himself in the process, gaining quasi-human status just as Spock (Leonard Nimoy) had before him in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (Nicholas Meyer, 1982) and, like Spock, we are given to understand that he too will be reborn.[44]

The android, B4, conveniently found at the beginning of the film, is the exact double of Data in every way – with the exception that he is still more innocent – and therefore ideally suited to follow in Data's footsteps. In fact, Picard immediately begins instructing his new charge by providing a fitting epitaph of his predecessor:

Picard: In his quest to be more like us he helped us to see what it means to be human.
B4: My . . . my brother was not human?
Picard: No, no he wasn't. But his wonder, his curiosity about every facet of human nature allowed all of us to see the best part of ourselves. He evolved. He embraced change because he always wanted to be better than he was.

The android that longed to be human thus serves as a metaphor of *Star Trek*'s attempt to both question and uphold human ideals, yet Data never achieves human status, even in death, and B4 serves merely to offset the pathos of his final act. Although Data's sacrifice is seemingly designed to stress how close he came to being human, the existence of a walking talking carbon copy – newly assembled, with a memory download, ready to take his place – ultimately detracts from this reading by proving instead how *different* he is to humans. Picard's clone demonstrates that being made from the same components will not produce the same person and, in his case, the integrity of the individual is retained. By contrast, Data's clone is presumed to be a far more accurate copy and Data's individuality, unlike that of any human, is seemingly preserved beyond death.

Any option on the new android's part in deciding about his future is apparently denied, just as having Data's memories transferred to his mind is similarly decided by others on B4's behalf. Earlier in the narrative, engineering officer Geordie La Forge (LeVar Burton) voices misgivings about the download, saying: 'Maybe he's not supposed to be like you, Data. Maybe he's supposed to be exactly the way he is.' Data's response is to repeat the mantra that has been taught to him: 'That may be so, but I believe he should have the opportunity to explore his potential.' Rather than allow his 'brother' to form his own memories and develop accordingly, the transfer is explained as assistance, phrased as 'exploring potential' when in

many ways it is a literal colonisation of the mind. B4 is treated as an empty vessel waiting to be filled, and in evidencing vestiges of his brother's memories at the end of the film, singing the Irving Berlin number 'Blue Skies' that was sung by Data at Troi and Riker's wedding, the implication is that Data lives on. While Shinzon failed in his attempt to secure 'the triumph of the echo over the voice', B4 succeeds precisely in this mission, based as it is upon emulating, rather than eradicating, his predecessor. With time we are led to believe that B4 will have the best of both worlds, being sufficiently machine-like to evade potentially problematic emotions, yet with enough understanding and respect for humans to bolster our collective ego.

Star Trek may itself be seen as a hybrid text in its ambivalent response to such figures, revealing an awareness of the duality of human nature while simultaneously denying and displacing negative characteristics in order to achieve its vision of social harmony. In the two-world systems and other oppositions presented in its narratives, the show seems to repeat founding binaries yet also refuses distinct categories. 'Race' is used as a fictional device in order to dramatise differences and explore inequalities of power, yet it is human nature that is truly being investigated.

Various hybrid characters are presented in order to prove that species difference is a mutable concept. They also provide ample scope for dramatic conflict, exhibiting divided loyalties and internal tensions and thus serve as a metaphor of humanity's own equally divided nature. Yet 'hybrids' also shore up the idea of a 'family of man', proving that diverse species are able to coexist. *Star Trek* has increasingly employed a familial sub-text to bond its crew members together,[45] and the adoption of 'orphan' characters in Starfleet is in keeping with this, seemingly demonstrating the liberalism and tolerance of humans in the twenty-fourth century. Spock, Worf, Data, Odo, Seven of Nine and B'Elanna Torres are all liminal figures who lack any other place they could call home. Whether or not they are an overt attempt to idealise America's multicultural society, the abundance of such characters in the franchise suggests that liminality is an increasingly prevalent cultural condition, one that *Star Trek* attempts to comment on in depicting the estrangement these figures experience, often conflicted in terms of their cultural origins, sometimes not even knowing where they belong.

Sceptics remain in abundance however, with Adam Roberts perceiving the show's 'mission' to be a celebration of American cultural dominance in the world, arguing that the series attempts to 'flatten difference into a kind of Galactic Americana'.[46] Daniel Bernardi is more specific in his criticism, and exemplifies the reductive potential of applying postcolonial theory too rigidly by suggesting that any inclusion of non-whites is tokenistic, that all aliens signify blacks, and that the franchise has a missionary agenda of 'whitewashing' colonial history by explaining it as exploration. In Bernardi's view 'whiteness' remains the model by which others are judged, claiming that 'for all its rhetoric of humanism, diversity, and plurality' *Star Trek* presents us with a future 'where everything from the multicultural past to the assimilation of dark aliens smacks of a neo-colonialist project'.[47] Bernardi's insistence on assessing aliens via skin-tone could itself be accused of racism however, and his claims surrounding miscegenation are

contradicted by the number of bi-racial offspring represented in *Star Trek*, merging humans with Vulcans, Betazoids, Klingons and others. That reproduction across species is even possible negates the degree of physiognomic difference between them, a fact explained in the episode 'The Chase' as all species having been genetically seeded by the same ancestral race. Bernardi focuses only on whether the colour of these founding aliens is dark enough to confer his approval and ignores the significance of the episode's message, which is that all species are fundamentally the same. That they do not behave in the same way is explained through their separate development and differing values, and although humans have clearly understood the universalist message of the ancestral alien better than anyone, this does not necessarily imply that humanity must stand for whiteness. Indeed, Bernardi seems to support dangerous polarities while ignoring the headway the franchise has made, not only by casting black actors in prominent positions, but also in the issues addressed. In dismissing such measures as tokenism an impossible position is reached, one that is apparent within postcolonial theory as a whole, in which any attempt to discuss or even redress the degree of difference between people is accused of evasion, e-race-sure, or 'whitewashing'.

Katrina G. Boyd concurs with Bernardi's assessment of *Star Trek* in arguing that it 'constructs its utopian future by drawing on a nineteenth-century faith in progress, human perfectibility and expanding frontiers' yet which attempts 'to reclaim the humanist imagination of that period from charges of complicity in oppressive practices'.[48] It is therefore less about the future, in her view, than an effort to reclaim the past, and legitimate Western imperialism in the process, yet to evaluate *Star Trek* in this way ignores its capacity to question imperialist ideas while undermining the lengths it has gone to in attempting to acknowledge cultural diversity. As Said argues, 'the difficulty is how to go about preserving what is unique about different cultures and experience while also preserving some sense of the human community'.[49] Even if the results have not been ideal, the show's attempt at inclusivity is surely laudable, as is its ability to conceive a future where differences are put aside for a common goal. If *Star Trek* is overly simplistic, if it denies many aspects of human nature, if it resorts to sentiment and wishful thinking in aiming to provide a utopian future, then at least it aspires towards an ideal, even if, like Data, it frequently falls short of the mark. For all its shortcomings, and in clear contrast to postcolonial discourse, it also presents a unified idea of humans who are able to learn from the mistakes of the past and work together to achieve a better future. Data epitomes human aspiration, and while he may never attain human status he gets closer to it than Shinzon, proving that physiological distinctions are an irrelevant means of evaluating identity. Instead, an emphasis is placed on upholding specific values and in demonstrating ethical responsibility towards others.

Aylish Wood perceives a similar message in a number of films featuring technological beings which also opt to define 'humanness' in terms of moral awareness. As Wood summarises: 'if a machine can make the same sort of objective and subjective choices as human beings then as a sentient being it is not distinguishable from humans, and so deserves the same rights'.[50] Many have regarded this

humanistic imperative as suspect, including Vivian Sobchack, who argues that 'mainstream SF's articulation of resemblance between aliens and humans preserves the subordination of "other worlds, other cultures, other species" to the world, culture and "speciality" of White American culture'.[51] While I have noted that specific cultural inflections can be found in such texts, in showing 'humanity' to be contingent upon specific cultural mores they are no longer rendered natural or invisible. An element of performance is acknowledged by Wood who asserts that: 'If a technology can perform as though it were human to the extent that its difference is either not apparent, or is of little consequence, then any notion of an authentic humanness becomes redundant. Instead, what emerges is that particular categories are validated in the recognition of humanness, whilst other categories are explicitly invalidated.'[52] However, it is erroneous to view approved traits as necessarily white, or even Western, particularly where the most common featured characteristics for 'humanness' are a need for community and moral awareness – ideas that are surely universal. Moreover, even if they are considered to be cultural constructs, the ethical imperatives embedded within these ideals remain only too relevant.

A number of films produced in recent year speculate on the future potential to create new life-forms and ask what rights or status might be afforded to such figures. If we were to create another 'species' through bio-engineering – the most conceivable way in which such a possibility might occur – would it experience prejudice? Would such beings have to struggle to secure the equivalent of rights? Would they always be peripheral to the norm that is humanity? Might they even supersede ordinary humans? *Gattaca* (Niccol, 1997) portrays the possible consequence of genetic engineering as enabling a new hierarchy to develop, detailing a brave new world in which 'valids' have all the best jobs at the expense of anyone born with defects. It is not simply a matter of greater intelligence or ability among the new elite that appeals to employers, but greater longevity also, for valids provide a better return on their investment by simply living longer. Posthumanity is presented as the next evolutionary step and it remains the task of anyone attempting to infiltrate this privileged world to try and 'pass' as a valid, just as lighter skin, rounder eyes, a change of name, the adoption of Western clothes and speech codes are equivalent strategies employed today in order to acquire status.[53] The film refutes the idea of biological predestination, showing that science cannot deter the human will to succeed as Vincent (Ethan Hawke) rises beyond his lowly position as a janitor with a heart condition and gains entry into the technocratic elite by borrowing someone else's genetic code. In doing so he must routinely eradicate his own physical identity, lest bodily traces such as skin particles or hair follicles give him away, and, somewhat improbably, he triumphs.

While *Gattaca* is a thought-provoking examination of a genetically engineered society, *The 6th Day* (Spottiswoode, 2000) is a gauche Arnie vehicle that deals with the prospect of cloning mainly for laughs, yet raises some interesting points nonetheless. For example, although the replication of human organs are allowed in the narrative's projected future, the brain is considered sacred – reiterating the idea that consciousness and individuality are located within the mind. The film's title

refers to the law that bans full human cloning yet we discover that this is already being violated. Adult-size dummy bodies are grown in vats, waiting to be implanted with DNA for instant results, with personality and memory faithfully transferred by some inexplicable means. However, congenital defects remain, as the scientist responsible for developing these procedures, Dr Griffin Weir (Robert Duvall), discovers. He has cloned his wife every five years for the last twenty years trying to eradicate a strain of cystic fibrosis, yet this is replaced by a fatal form of liver cancer in later models, suggesting that science cannot screen out 'impurities', or obliterate death.

Commerce is, once again, the ruling imperative, creating human clones as a means of exploitation. As we are told, a clone has no rights and cannot own anything. The clone company takes DNA from new employees as an insurance policy, knowing that they can replicate them if their lives should end prematurely. This also allows greater control over workers. As the mastermind of this plan explains: 'By giving them shorter lifespans we extend our leverage', meaning that they are able to coerce clones with the promise of being born again. The twist of the film is that protagonist, Adam Gibson (Arnold Schwarzenegger), who is opposed to cloning as an 'unnatural' process, turns out to be the clone. So perfect an imitation is he that he has even 'downloaded' the values and beliefs of his original and successfully collaborates with him to wipe out the human clone industry. What sort of life he is left with after discovering his true identity remains open, with profound questions left to the final exchange in which he asks: 'Am I really human? Do I have a soul?' – only to be reassured by the original that he has helped to save his family, adding: 'If that's not being human, I don't know what is.'

Again we are told that if 'human' values remain, it does not really matter where a being comes from, individual worth is proven by ethical behaviour. Yet humans remain deeply flawed, and as the film illustrates, technology will only replicate pre-existing traits, whether they are deemed good or bad, inferring that the worst parts of human nature cannot be evaded. The increase of clone themes in cinema suggests prevalent anxieties surrounding bio-technologies and the uses to which they may be put, revising a standard trope in SF and horror from *Frankenstein* on, yet the biggest fear in these films is that material power over life will result in exploitation. In this sense they revise the motif present in cyborg worker narratives of the 1980s, questioning how advanced technologies may be used to exact greater control over individuals.

A similar concern can be found in the *Alien* films, which counterpoint *Star Trek*'s utopian leanings by portraying human values undergoing a steady decline. By the fourth instalment, *Alien: Resurrection* (Jeunet, 1997), people have descended to the level of trading on human bodies, including that of the franchise's hero, Ripley, who is resurrected from death with the aid of medical science in order to extract the alien DNA she harbours. A clone created from a blood sample taken in the previous film, the resulting figure – termed as Ripley 8 – is a hybrid composite of alien and human who may also be viewed as an attempt to create the ultimate superhero out of Ripley, exchanging human emotion and vulnerability for the physical strength and acerbic one-liners we have come to expect from action

heroes. Not only is Ripley 8 of a decidedly mixed heritage but she is also post-human in terms of her heightened senses and acid blood, yet despite this hybrid status and the unsavoury examples of humanity seen in the film, deference to humans must seemingly be given and she negates her alien ancestry to the extent that she actively participates in their extermination. Although humans are so mercenary that they are willing to profit from cryogenically frozen bodies, and are still too dumb to realise that the alien is not a species to be tamed and trained for military use, they are nevertheless deemed preferable to the resurrected aliens unconvincingly framed as humanity's nemesis.

With attendant irony, it is an android, Call (Winona Ryder) who serves as the final repository of human(e) values, having been programmed to care for humanity, thus proving Asimov's belief that our mechanical creations might indeed become a better breed than ourselves.[54] This brings the franchise's treatment of synthetic humans full circle. While Ash (Ian Holm) falsely exhibited the most compassion in the first film, and Bishop (Lance Henrikson) proved how trustworthy androids could be in the sequel, Call upholds human ideals more fervently than any human and even seems to hate herself for not being (biologically) human, stating of her android body: 'look at me . . . I'm disgusting'. Yet it is their difference to humans that ultimately bonds Call and Ripley 8, and the mother/daughter relationship figured between the two emphasises the fact that although neither one is truly human they nevertheless behave in an appropriately familiar manner. That Ripley 8 is closer, genetically, to the offspring she annihilates is seemingly beside the point, and regardless of whether her affiliation with Call is prompted by vestiges of the original Ripley (and the maternal instincts she exhibited), or by an underlying memory of her former battles with the alien, Ripley 8 elects to fight for the human cause, even if it seems irretrievably lost.

Alien: Resurrection concludes with both hybrid figures heading for earth – a place that neither have been to before. It is an interesting ending for characters who are 'betwixt and between' identities because it confirms the extent of their displacement. Both are anomalies, neither should truly exist, yet it is through them that humanity is preserved. As they approach earth it is interesting to speculate what kind of life they can expect there, and to what extent this will depend on their ability to 'pass' as human. It also worth considering that while each may be tenuously approved in the narrative, even presented as improving on humans, they also evade the bodily concerns that make hybridity more complex and difficult terrain in actual life.

Amal Treacher interprets the central problem surrounding miscegenation as one of crossed borders marked by sexuality, stating: 'what we all know is that for a mix of blood to occur there has to be a mix of other fluids as well . . . the strong injunction here is not to mix up categories, that "pure" blood should not be mixed with the "tainted" blood of the Other'.[55] The androids and clones discussed in this chapter elide such categories of purity, and in some cases even blood itself. In 'The Naked Now' Data paraphrases Shylock's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, thereby comparing himself to a subject of prejudice yet also undermining the analogy when it gets to the matter of blood, comically stating 'if you prick me do

I not . . . leak?' Shinzon may have the same 'noble Picard blood' pumping in his veins but this is superseded by his cultural affiliations and rendered irrelevant to his identity. *Gattaca*'s 'valids' prove their status with blood and urine samples, thus making skin colour and 'ethnicity' seemingly immaterial; while Ripley 8's acid blood reveals that the high cost of cyborg survival is forfeiting her former identity, even if she acquires formidable strength as a result.

To return to Haraway's earlier formulation, all are 'non-original persons who are multiply displaced', all have been created rather than born, all are profoundly unnatural beings, and all point to humanity as a varied and versatile identity. In this sense they demonstrate hybridity as a means of refuting fixed notions of subjectivity. Yet despite the temptation to celebrate such positioning, as Said suggests in affirming that for those who are 'between homes' a new perspective is offered in which 'all things are indeed counter, original, spare, strange',[56] others have claimed this experience as disturbing and disorienting. Treacher attests to her own experiences of an identity 'which has been built, in part, on dislocation and marginality'[57] and which is impacted with the dilemma of knowing 'how to bend without falling over and how to reach an elastic balance of being with others', ultimately in 'identifying how one is the same and different to others in a struggle of finding a home and a secure place'.[58]

Such detractions have not precluded others from perceiving certain freedoms in 'elasticity' and rootlessness however. As McLeod argues:

> The concept of hybridity has proved very important for diaspora peoples, and indeed many others too, as a way of thinking beyond exclusionary, fixed, binary notions of identity based on rooted-ness, and cultural, racial and national purity. Hybrid identities are never total and complete in themselves, like orderly pathways built from crazy-paving. Instead, they remain perpetually in motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes, open to change and re-inscription.[59]

While this is a highly optimistic reading, akin to the fragmentation and fluidity associated with postmodern descriptions of contemporary identity, there is a danger of celebrating the ruptures and confusion that frequently cause little more than pain and alienation in actual experience. As Dirlik eloquently reminds us, despite First World academics celebrating the concept of hybridity as a progressive idea, 'in the world outside the academy, however, it shows in murderous ethnic conflict, continued inequalities among societies, classes and genders, and the absence of oppositional possibilities that, always lacking in coherence, are rendered even more impotent than earlier by the fetishisation of difference, fragmentation and so on'.[60] Such conflicts are becoming increasingly pronounced, particularly since the events now known as '9/11', and in order to understand the national antagonisms and religious fundamentalism that are so rife today we need to come to terms with the divisions that exist between people, to know why it is that ideologies of hatred persist, and to question how they are likely to be overcome.

We also need to assess whether postcolonial theory is capable of providing any sense of hope. Ultimately it seems to be as loaded with assumptions and internal

dissension as any other theory we have encountered, with the failure to agree even on specific terms and their meaning – including that of 'hybridity' – attesting to the difficulty of achieving any mutual understanding, even within the academy. As in the case of Marxist and feminist discourses, ruptures contradictions and partial truths are endemic to any attempt to explain reality or identity in simple terms and this is equally true of postcolonial theory, yet its main problem is in presenting a double bind in terms of how differences between groups are to be acknowledged without subscribing to essentialism. If all depictions of non-whites, for example, are accused of either being racist in negative portrayals, pandering to 'orientalism' by exoticising Otherness, or attempting to negate difference altogether, then a no-win situation clearly presents itself.

The divisions that exist today in terms of ethnic conflict and stark inequalities of opportunity belie the notion that affinities may easily be formed between people, yet this does not mean to say that such a possibility should be ruled out. In fact, it is as a means of providing much needed affiliations that hybridity has its clearest political use. In theory, like the cyborg, hybridity should disprove 'either/or' distinctions in proving that supposed boundaries can be transgressed, and acknowledging that, as a species, we are all mixed up. As Said has commented, 'partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic'.[61] Yet this notion is still shocking to many, partly because the idea of discrete divisions has become so embedded as to reach the status of 'common sense'.

In ideological terms hybridity should enable a means beyond reductive dualisms and acknowledge that a middle ground is possible, what Bhabha referred to as a 'third space', providing the opportunity to question the validity of any singular value-system. That it fails to do so is partly because of its own ambivalence which might confound binary divisions but also limits any clear strategies for alliance, a factor the cyborg illustrates only too well in being, as Ross has put it, a 'myth that swings both ways'.[62] Internal divisions are equally problematic, for while some claim that hybridity may provide affiliations between people, particularly in recognising that alienation and displacement are common, if not universal, experiences, this has also provoked hostile rejection on the grounds that it ignores the historical oppression of selected groups. Certain binaries have proven to be difficult to dismantle and as Stuart Hall has indicated, in many ways racial identity can only exist in relation to other races, stating that his 'blackness' only became understood when he left Jamaica.[63]

Postcolonial theory falls into the same trap as many aspects of feminism in this regard, relying on the same set of oppositions as the discourse being critiqued, frequently reverting to biologism, and trying to maintain alienation and oppression as an exclusive preserve. Humanism tends to be disapproved of for this reason, accused of negating power differentials between people, while elements from other discourses have been significantly amended to reconceive such relations. For example, the term 'subaltern' was originated by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci as a means of describing all subordinated peoples, yet was subsequently

appropriated by postcolonial theorists, proving how ideological meanings themselves can become hybridised, refined and changed. However, theorists within the Subaltern Studies group have also dispensed with any critique of Capitalism, a tendency Dirlik among others has strongly criticised, arguing that 'global capitalism . . . however fragmented in appearance, serves as the structuring principle of global relations'.[64] By excluding such concerns, postcolonial theory is in danger of creating an inaccurate perception of social reality, one that ignores mutual problems faced by various exploited groups, and consequently the need to forge alliances – with cultural perceptions of identity and power evading material factors. The utilisation of 'subaltern' from its former reference to those who are without power or privilege in society – a reading that traversed racial, gender and class divisions – to now invoke certain people of colour further reveals a transition from a potential universal to a very specific particularity, and is indicative of the limitations of micropolitics itself in failing to look at the bigger picture and perceive factors that may unite us all.

A crucial issue within identity politics is how to achieve a sense of unity that is not decried as an attempt to negate differences between people, to understand the particular experiences and histories that contribute towards our formations of self without perpetuating hostilities, to provide narratives of integration, not separation, and a vision of humanity that all can aspire to. The indeterminate status of the fictional figures discussed highlights the degree to which identity is a complex issue. Where a nominal humanity is conferred upon such subjects the same criteria is insisted upon, demanding that specific ideals are upheld. Humanity, in this sense, is culturally ascribed, yet to argue that these values are specifically white or Western is highly contentious. Wood argues that the categories validated by cinema's technological beings are fundamentally conservative, providing a 'version of humanness dominated by whiteness, middle-classness and heterosexuality', yet she also maintains that the common themes of 'communication, caring, rationality balanced by emotions and the need for community emerge'.[65] While such themes may be identified with humanism, they also confirm the degree to which it is a progressive philosophy which should therefore not be dismissed out of hand, particularly as these ideals have been instrumental in articulating a vital recognition of our common humanity. A humanistic ethos insists that mutual understanding can yield positive social change, and that a level of kinship and attendant rights are fundamental to all. While such kinship may be specious to some, it is also a necessary means of enabling the connections and commitments that will secure rights and redress power differentials, not only in racial or cultural terms, but in human ones.

The narratives we have looked at in this chapter question the ethical consequences of bio-tech research and re-examine the question of what it means to be human, suggesting that it is made up of both positive and negative traits, the latter of which are most clearly expressed in prejudice and hatred, megalomania and genocide. They also argue that such elements can be transcended – not via technology, which simply replicates existing tendencies, but in ethical behaviour. All refute the idea that 'biology is destiny' and place greater emphasis on personal

attributes and aspirations, on upbringing and environment, on having the right input. Hybridity occupies the middle ground between humanity and its presumed Other, with technology serving as a means by which to question the veracity of natural distinctions and reconsider relations of power. Clone figures, in particular, symbolise the potential of new technologies to exploit life, indicating that economic issues remain a chief concern for us all, and suggesting the need for a hybridised or interdisciplinary discourse that will merge the best aspects of Marxism, feminism and postcolonialism in order to effect mutual understanding, collaboration and resistance.

Against the worrying trend towards a resurgent tribalism reflected around the world, it is worth remembering Frantz Fanon's call for a 'rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words, into humanism'[66] Said queried the use of the term in this context, 'where it is free from the narcissistic individualism, divisiveness and colonialist egotism of the imperialism that justified the white man's rule',[67] yet despite such skepticism a humanistic ethos seems worthy of being reclaimed in terms of what it has to offer. While the quandary regarding identity is how to establish any degree of commonality without being accused of attempting to erase differences between people, we might also want to consider whether a divided past necessarily implies that divisions must be perpetuated into the future. This is not to suggest that the atrocities of imperialism should be forgotten, or to deny that the ramifications of colonialism are still being experienced today, but to question how these problems are to be effectively challenged. This may involve needing to reassess a number of assumptions, for example, that humanism is irrevocably aligned with patriarchy, or even 'whiteness' – which is surely just as problematic a category as blackness, while positive elements of Enlightenment thinking in terms of promoting education, scientific progress and liberalism may be deemed worthy of salvaging rather than simply accused of acting as a smokescreen for imperialism.

Rather than become situated on either side of an unbridgeable divide, it seems necessary to appreciate identity as mutable rather than monolithic. In this regard hybridity is potentially useful in finding common ground between previously opposed spheres of knowledge and affiliation, acknowledging the extent to which 'cultural meanings and identities always contain the traces of other meanings and identities'.[68] McLeod summarises colonialism's central objective as an attempt to 'domesticate colonised subjects and abolish their radical "otherness", thus bringing them inside Western understanding through the orientalist project of constructing knowledge about them',[69] yet it is only through attempting to understand different cultures and questioning how genuinely 'radical' differences are between people that will yield the level of kinship necessary to achieve tolerance, or change.

A number of motives can be attributed to the films discussed, and their investigation of identity and status, yet in confirming an intrinsic quality deemed as human, they ultimately corroborate Data's assertion that humanity is about striving to become better than we are. Artificial or partial humans provide a means of evaluating how difference is negotiated, while also demonstrating that presumed

polarities can be effaced. Johnny 5, Andrew Martin, Data and Call each transcend the status of machines through the values they uphold, while the various clones discussed provide a new take on evolutionary mutation, similarly proving identity to be a permeable construct. Origins and distinctions are thus rendered immaterial and being or becoming human is conflated with the most positive ideals. Technology allows humanity's best qualities to emerge and the fusion of rationality and morality even suggests the creation of a better species, one that is not divided by irrational hostilities, which is perhaps the most positive articulation of what hybridity has to offer. Ultimately, these figures must prove their loyalty, defer to humans, and adopt certain values, yet far from being colonised or subordinated figures they negate the idea of intrinsic distinctions and confirm humanity to be a universal concept based on community and compassion.

Of course they also reassure audiences that whatever changes may occur in society, even relatively radical scientific interventions, certain ideals will prevail. Hence Call and Data are each 'programmed' to care about humans, just as Ripley 8's maternal protectiveness towards Call and the Adam clone's instinctive desire to protect what he regards as his family also constitute a programming of sorts – one that is designed to domesticate the threat of Otherness through familiarity and, ultimately, through the family. Cyborg narratives may orient themselves towards any number of futures yet retain certain key tropes in doing so and it is interesting to note how surrogate families have been used to bring 'Others' into the fold, both challenging and championing specific ideas in the process. The circumstances of this theme, and how familial relations became emphasised in films of the 1990s, will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

6
Heart and Hearth: The Cyborg and Family Values

As was noted in the previous chapter, cinematic cyborgs tend to fall into either of two categories – allies and enemies – with each stance determined by their relative familiarity and corresponding degree of threat to the values deemed most 'human'. Yet even ostensible enemies may become humanised by conforming to an established set of behavioural parameters and ideological codes. The use of 'family values' is one such code that has often been utilised as a means of recuperating the 'non-human' in SF narratives and which became increasingly common in cyborg films of the 1990s. The idea itself is far from new, however. In fact, it was established by Isaac Asimov who not only developed the Three Laws of Robotics as a fictional means of rendering robots safe by programming them with a set of behavioural inhibitors, but whose very first robot story, *Robbie* (first published in 1940 as *Strange Playfellow*), explicitly proves a robot's safety by making it family-friendly.

The story was designed to counter the technophobia prevalent in other robot fiction of the era, with Asimov demonstrating technology's trustworthiness by not only placing a robot inside a family home, but designing it to serve as a mechanical nanny to a young child. Although initially suspicious, the child's mother has her fears allayed when she witnesses the bond that develops between the two and sees 'Robbie' save her child's life. Rationality and sentiment thus combine in order to defuse any mistrust and the robot is finally approved as part of the family.

The same strategy was to be re-worked in a number of cyborg films, including *Terminator 2*, which can be seen to update many elements of Asimov's story. Old-fashioned family values of kinship and paternal responsibility were fused with high-tech possibilities in order to convince audiences that, far from posing a threat to humanity (and, more specifically, the family), the cyborg could actually help to secure the values inscribed within this institution.

Not only was a new attitude to technology displayed by such narrative concerns, but towards the notion of the family also, which functioned as a symbol of both solidarity and faith in the future. This ideal of family unity can be traced back to the nineteenth century when, as Andrew Calcutt observes, 'the Protestant work ethic in the factory and what have subsequently become known as family values in the home came together as mutually reinforcing elements of the widespread belief that the best of all possible worlds, if not already here, would not be long in

coming'.[1] The family's alliance with such patently utopian aspirations can be clearly discerned in the transition cyborg figures underwent in the 'caring, sharing nineties', with the family becoming a vital trope by which *Universal Soldier*'s Vietnam vet is finally able to return home, *Terminator 2*'s reprogrammed killer learns to understand humanity, and *RoboCop 3*'s technologically revamped law enforcer regains a measure of his former identity. If being part of a family has become the last bastion of human identity in SF cinema, the final means of distinguishing the human from its Other, then the cyborg's inclusion within the realm of hearth and home is clearly significant. However, not all cyborgs of this era would have this apparent privilege extended to them – a fact which makes such exceptions equally interesting, and which is therefore addressed here also.

The purpose of this chapter is not to adhere to the psychoanalytic tendency of transposing an Oedipal model of the nuclear family onto all narratives, but to evaluate instead how the family was used in cyborg films of the 1990s to perform a number of ideological tasks, including re-evaluating what constitutes family kinship; reinterpreting paternal and maternal roles; and reinvesting faith in the redemptive qualities associated with the family in order to make the future less threatening.

The family was touched on previously in Chapter 3, in which it was argued that economic problems raised in a number of cyborg films are also often obscured by a focus on domestic issues. Indeed, just as the romances that conclude *Metropolis, Blade Runner* and *Total Recall* effectively elide the political issues at stake by attempting to impose an incongruous happy ending, the family romances of the 1990s can be seen to reiterate the same tendency. An examination of familial sub-texts during this period is what takes place here, assessing what narrative and ideological functions were served by this theme, and how more recent depictions compare.

The appeal of the family lies in its affiliation with a set of ideas that are held to be both dominant and natural, yet family values, as this chapter will demonstrate, are as much a social construct as the model of the male-headed nuclear family that is increasingly becoming more the exception than the rule in contemporary Western society. In fact, 'familism' – the ideology of the nuclear family and its attendant notion of 'proper' gender roles, social values and modes of behaviour – is akin to any other discourse encountered, being equally prone to partiality, dogmatism and inaccuracy in its view of social relations. It is because familial discourse is not readily apparent as such – because it has been used by the church, politicians, the medical establishment and the media as a self-evident 'truth' – that greater scrutiny of its ideological implications are all the more necessary.

Cyborg cinema provides an arena in which the contradictions inherent within familial discourse become foregrounded. For example, while one of the main tenets of familism may be defined as the instinct to produce and protect children, such values are problematised by the cyborg families represented in Hollywood cinema of the 1990s, particularly as 'protection' is mobilised in these texts to excuse violence. Indeed, while films such as *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3* reduce the level of violence shown from that of their predecessors, this seems to be motivated by

the need to gain a lower certification (and thus yield a potentially higher return) rather than any moral responsibility. Moreover, violence remains embedded within such narratives, and is even legitimated by the familial context used, thereby condoning the use of force if conducted in the name of the family – and highlighting the same twisted logic used to excuse a variety of organisations and activities, from militiamen to military offensives abroad.[2]

A related feature of these films, and one that has proved no less controversial, is that an accentuated paternal role was given to 'male' cyborg figures during this decade, stressing a more intuitive and caring approach to fathering than had traditionally been approved in cinema. This is evaluated in relation to the wider social context in which these transitions emerged in order to determine whether the cyborg fathers represented on screen are as progressive as they seem. While such representations affirm the need for revisions to be made to the traditional model of fatherhood – and thus seem to respond to feminist critiques of masculinity and male parenting – they also appear to mock the conflicted desires expressed therein and have been accused of simplistic revisionism. The degree to which maternal roles changed over this period is still more questionable, yet how mothers are depicted in cyborg narratives, the function they perform within the family unit and the choices they exercise in terms of reproductive rights are also duly assessed. Ultimately, the cyborg families discussed share both progressive and regressive traits, just as the notion of family values are themselves deeply ambivalent, yet evaluated together, they at least help to uncover some of the conceits that underlie the discourse of familism, thus rendering explicit the extent to which they are neither as natural nor as neutral as they have appeared.

If one trait was clearly discernible in cyborg films of the 1990s, it was that cyborg protagonists were frequently given a family and thus rendered more human. This is famously exemplified by the radical transformation of the T-800 in *Terminator 2* who shifts from his former role as threat to humanity (symbolised by the Connor family) to that of its protector. The change is internal, achieved by the alteration of a learning circuit within the cyborg's brain, yet is equally reliant on the assumption of shared ideals at a wider level, for in deeming such a transformation to be possible the film relies on the audience's willingness to place their faith in the family's redemptive abilities.

Not only is technology's threat diminished by this process of accommodation, but the presumed inevitability of dystopia is made less discomforting (and less likely) than it had initially appeared. In an essay entitled 'SF and the Future' John Huntingdon asserts that 'by repeating historical and psychological patterns from the past, [SF] manages to domesticate the future, to render it habitable and, in spite of a somewhat strange surface, basically familiar'.[3] Such a strategy is all too discernible in films of the 1990s, in which cyborg protagonists become familiarised and domesticated through familial connections, thus helping to render the future they inhabit a much more encouraging prospect.

Norman L. Friedman has argued that SF films of the 1970s and 1980s can be divided into two broad categories: the dystopian anti-technology film (including *Mad Max*, *Blade Runner* and *The Terminator*); and the lighter, more optimistic

youth-oriented, pro-technology films typified by the likes of George Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogy. In the case of *Terminator 2*, however, made in 1991, Friedman argues that the film 'ingeniously straddled and/or combined the two subtypes, as a successor to the earlier dark film on the one hand but, as a broader appeal, more youth-oriented film that featured a "nice" Terminator creature and his friendship with a young boy (reminiscent of the film *E.T.*) on the other'.[4] The reference to *E.T.* (Spielberg, 1982) is significant, as this film has generated a great deal of analysis in terms of the alien's function as a substitute father for the child protagonist, Elliott (Henry Thomas).[5] It therefore offers a number of parallels with the T-800's relationship to the equally fatherless John Connor (Edward Furlong). Both are transitory figures who arrive during a period of emotional upheaval, yet whose connection with each boy is pronounced, evoking empathy and responsible behaviour. They can also be interpreted as a response to changing social conditions, temporarily filling the gap left by absent fathers, and granting a wish-fulfilment fantasy of togetherness and understanding.

What is also provided in such narratives, and their emphasis on family issues, is greater commercial appeal. The economic factors of Hollywood film production in the late 1980s and 1990s, faced with increasing pressure from cable and home video technologies (as much as a politically conservative moral climate), were a crucial motivating factor behind lower certification, an increased emphasis on special effects, and narratives that focused on the family. Yet while on-screen families tend to be calculated to attract family audiences, they are frequently used to support values that are far from natural, and are worth analysing for this very reason. As Sarah Harwood has argued: 'The family, like gender, is a social construction. It has its roots in ideology as firmly as in material reality.'[6] Far from being monolithic, however, the family as both concept and social formation is itself in transition, a fact which Harwood crucially affirms in adding that 'both ideological and material families change over time'.[7] Such changes have included the rise in divorce and an increase of single families and step-parents over the last twenty years, and cinema's response to these developments can be seen in its revised depiction of the family over this period, particularly within the SF genre.

The Terminator, *RoboCop* and *Alien* series each mark the family's transition in interesting ways, with sequels portraying surrogate parenting and single motherhood as alternatives to the 'traditional' model of the nuclear family. Yet although such examples present a broader, and more realistic, range of options to one that was steadily becoming outmoded in actual experience, they have also been criticised for the values upheld. For example, although depictions of surrogacy and single parenthood may appear progressive in envisaging an 'unnatural' model of familial relations – one not based on blood ties or marriage – specific gender roles remain unquestioned. Thus while *Terminator 2*'s Sarah Connor and *Aliens*' Ripley are each transgressive female characters in terms of their appearance and assertiveness, it may be argued that they are also reclaimed by patriarchy via the maternal function given to them. Though neither gun-toting heroine ostensibly subscribes to traditional 'feminine' behaviour, Cameron places each in a position where the mother's 'instinct' to protect her young becomes foregrounded.

Consequently, far from transgressing traditional gender roles, these characters could be said to merely return to primitive archetypes. In commenting on *Aliens*' treatment of gender difference and its apparent need to 'feminise' Ripley by providing her with a daughter to nurture, Constance Penley has argued that: 'What we get finally is a conservative moral lesson about maternity, futuristic or otherwise: mothers will be mothers, and they will always be women.'[8] Indeed, it seems that the primary role of such characterisation is to prove the inevitability of the maternal instinct within women – all women – regardless of surface appearance. Hence, the toughened Sarah Connor of *Terminator 2* ultimately fails at being a terminator and learns instead how to love her son and act like a 'proper mom' by the end of the film.

Whether mothers will always be women, however, as Penley asserts, is a different matter. A new model of masculinity was offered by male cyborgs during the 1990s that provides a telling response to changing societal conditions and the disparities of gender representation within mainstream Hollywood cinema. If female characters seem inevitably inclined towards a maternal function in a regressive nod to biological determinism, then the male cyborg's increased adoption of this role may well be its most radical feature, moving beyond traditional masculine characterisation to show literally 'reconstructed' men to be capable of empathy and nurturing.

The precedent for such transformations can be found in SF cinema of a decade earlier. Family values were used as a redemptive strategy in light-hearted child-oriented scenarios in which products of the US military evolve beyond their original parameters and are accommodated into the family instead. Innocent cyborg and robot figures, such as the electronically enhanced boy in *D.A.R.Y.L.* (Wincer, 1985) and *Short Circuit*'s 'Johnny' (Badham, 1986) each demonstrate, through their affiliation with caring humans, that their newfound capacity for conscience outweighs having been designed and built for war. Having evolved in this way, both are given honorary human status and are adopted by human parents. In other SF films of the decade mechanical and otherwise non-human characters would tend to visit the domestic sphere of the family home, rather than remain there, yet their inclusion within such a personal realm – no matter how brief – is notable nonetheless because of its very frequency. As Sobchack notes of this tendency: 'Alien Others have become less Other – be they extra-terrestrial teddy bears, starmen, brothers from another planet, robots, androids and replicants. They have become our familiars, our simulacra, embodied as literally alienated images of our alienated selves.'[9]

Far from viewing this phenomenon as progressive, Sobchack claims that such narratives merely naturalise alienation as a universal condition. Yet what is naturalised also, particularly where non-humans are granted inclusion into so private and nominally 'human' a space as the family, is a certain model of human behaviour. As was noted in Chapter 5, the embrace of Others is predicated on their adoption of specific social codes and values. By entering the home (and being accepted there), cyborg and alien Others have their differences diminished while simultaneously shoring up an idealised view of the family as an institution

that is intrinsically healthy, harmonious, and designed to promote positive social relations. Even adult cyborg films of the period do not evade such comforting homilies, and while families are rendered absent or otherwise inaccessible in certain examples of 1980s SF cinema, the ideal of the family remains. Frances Bonner maintains that 'families are not so much peripheral as off-screen altogether: faked in the photographs of *Blade Runner*; moved to another city in *RoboCop*, becoming only traces in the cyborg mind'.[10] However, it is the very fact that families are not only remembered, but so evidently craved by supposed non-humans that provides pathos and sentiment, thus bringing the machine closer to humanity and provoking a potential sense of kinship and identification with audiences.

Despite Sobchack's claims, such affinities may well be politically progressive in articulating a mutual sense of alienation and loss, particularly as these narratives question the social factors responsible for such emotions. After all, both Bonner's cited examples, *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop*, implicitly target Capitalism for having created the conditions which threaten both individuality and the family – as well as providing a model for opposition. The alliance formed between *Blade Runner*'s replicants indicates how 'family values' may be reinterpreted as a political strategy, being used to achieve a sense of identity and community that mobilises resistance against oppressive conditions. In later films also, such as *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3*, cyborg protagonists are provided with surrogate families that help them literally fight against those forces deemed to be a threat. Although neither film can be read as entirely progressive, as we shall see, they do at least provide a vision of the family as a group of individuals working together for what is perceived as the common good.

However, there are problems in utilising familial metaphors as an ideal social unit, particularly given the family's traditional connotations as an institution that is both hierarchical and patriarchal. Still more problematically, the narrative attempt to rehumanise cyborgs may be seen to provide a comfort zone for audiences that acts as a buffer against dystopian conditions, effacing political sensibilities with sentimental revisionism. In partial corroboration of this idea, during the 1990s, far from being peripheral to cyborg narratives, families became foregrounded instead as the means by which identity is restored, yet also the crucial means by which the future is accommodated rather than changed.

For Alex Murphy in *RoboCop 3*, it is the sign of his recovery and adjustment to cyborg status that he acquires an adoptive family to replace those lost to him. Moreover, this new family is infinitely better suited and able to serve the needs of his transformed self than their predecessors, not only accepting him for what he has become, but crucially understanding how he operates also. They thus help him to accept, in turn, the damage done to him by OCP, and use his cyborg status to their mutual advantage by helping to defend the Detroit community against corporate take-over. This retrofitted family is at the forefront of civil action, yet while they successfully help the citizens of Cadillac Heights to retain their homes, it is not Capitalism itself that is seen to threaten this community, as was noted in Chapter 3, but the Japanese, which makes their triumph politically problematic.

The family's social function in creating moral citizens is a staple motif of the cyborg film, yet while *RoboCop 3* attempts to use the family as a 'positive' symbol of social cohesion, families are also obliquely criticised in specific narratives, with the blame for negative behaviour placed squarely on the shoulders of the 'bad' family. For example, in *Universal Soldier* (Emmerich, 1992) a '*Platoon* meets *Frankenstein*' motif re-animates dead soldiers from the Vietnam War, yet adversaries retain their original personality traits, even in cyborg form. The 'good' soldier Luc Devreux (Jean-Claude Van Damme) is stable and caring, like *RoboCop*'s Murphy, because of the nurturing environment he came from and his humanity is recovered through his eventual return to the family farm and the destruction of his 'bad seed' adversary. The sadistic Sergeant Scott (Dolph Lundgren) is placed in opposition, and necessarily destroyed, because he apparently has no family to redeem him and threatens Devreux's own family reunion. Seemingly born 'bad' and incapable of behaving in any other way, rehabilitation, in Scott's case, is clearly not an option.[11]

In *Terminator 2* a more significant event occurs. The T-800 is a cyborg that was never fully human, who does not have memories to rekindle or a name he must remember, yet he effectively makes the transition from exterminating humans to becoming humanity's protector because of learning circuits that allow him to evolve (making him the 'adult' equivalent of both Daryl and 'Johnny'). While his technically superior rival, the T-1000, simulates people without ever getting under their skin, the T-800 learns to understand and care for humans, his role within the family unit, even a seemingly 'dysfunctional' one, being key to his socialisation.

Neither does he take control when he enters the family, assuming a position that defies that of the conventional patriarch. This contradicts critics such as Sobchack who has argued that SF cinema's depiction of the family is essentially conservative, claiming that it attempts to 'resolve narratively the contemporary weakening of patriarchal authority, and the glaring contradictions which exist between the mythology of family relations and their actual social practice'.[12] Such a contention is deeply pessimistic, and seemingly inaccurate in this context, for while establishing a father figure within the family unit admittedly helps to restore order in *T2*, the notion of patriarchal authority is significantly modified.

That the T-800 is taught about the value of human life by a 13-year-old boy marks a new awareness in terms of masculinity that crucially allows the possibility for change. The adolescent John Connor is a transitional male figure, not quite a man, who demonstrates a sense of compassion and leadership that the adult figures around him each learn from, and thanks to his teaching even a former terminator is shown to be capable of modifying behaviour such as innate (literally programmed) aggression. Other male cyborgs of the period similarly undergo internal transitions which positively affect their interaction with others, thereby destabilising mainstream cinema's depiction of the patriarchal hero who is emotionally removed from others as well as himself. Luc Devreux is vulnerable, despite his physical strength, and dependant on his female partner to survive in a world he does not understand. Murphy similarly depends to a large degree on female partners – thus broaching new collaborative possibilities between men and

women, while the T-800's attempt to understand why humans cry marks an additional turning point in entering the emotional realm that is traditionally marked as 'female' territory. Such representations not only move beyond the impregnable macho ideals that Springer and Dery have associated with the cyborg,[13] but can also be seen to respond to general criticisms made about 'typical male behaviour', using the cyborg as a symbol of men's capacity to change.

That masculinity required any such change is a subject that has provoked some debate, as well as alarm. Although critics have argued that patriarchy has been undermined for some time, with Sobchack claiming that a 'patriarchal crisis' occurred from the late 1960s onwards,[14] what has been popularly dubbed as a 'crisis of masculinity' only began to be widely discussed during the 1980s and 1990s. The causes behind this alleged crisis were manifold, prompted in part by industrial change, widening male unemployment, rising divorce rates and the increased prominence of women in the labour market. The sense of disenfranchisement men experienced as a result of these events, coupled with the criticisms made by dissatisfied female partners, led to a dilemma in establishing what was appropriate male behaviour. The resulting uncertainty and increasing frustration meant that women were blamed, in some quarters, for the conflicting demands many men felt had been made of them: to be both sensitive and strong, supportive yet independent, 'feminine' and 'masculine'.[15]

Iron John (1990) author, Robert Bly, was instrumental in setting up the 'men's movement' – a group devoted to raising male consciousness which soon displayed a virulent bitterness towards women and particularly mothers regarded as responsible for creating 'soft' men by raising their sons against the rugged macho archetype put forward as a natural gender trait. Bly also criticised men who had abandoned their families and were accused of causing negative behaviour stemming from the fractured male ego of sons left behind.[16] As these ideas began to gain prominence during the late 1980s and 1990s, an attendant stress on fatherhood and its responsibilities soon began to filter into the mass media.

Hollywood produced a number of comedies in which fathering problems were played for laughs as well as social commentary, from the one joke film *Three Men and a Baby* (Nimoy, 1987), whose humour rests on the apparent absurdity of having three bachelors look after a child, to the drag act comedy, *Mrs Doubtfire* (Columbus, 1993), which presents a feckless father and unemployed actor, Daniel Hillard (Robin Williams), who is forced to masquerade as a woman in order to reclaim his estranged family. He triumphs by showing he can be a better 'mother' than his former wife, getting a regular TV slot as his female persona and consequently access to his kids. Yet instead of staging a corny reconciliation between the couple, the film opts to point out that while divorce is sometimes inevitable, it need not be messy. Hollywood was beginning to face the changing shape of the family, and masculinity was accordingly re-shaped also.

Muscular action heroes such as Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger found themselves becoming increasingly anachronistic in the 1990s and duly turned towards comedic roles, while an attempt was made to star Jean-Claude Van Damme in a series of 'date movies' designed to cash in on his growing female fan-base.

These transitions may have been economically motivated, intending to extend the fading appeal of action heroes, yet they also indicate the changing cultural expectations being made of men, both on screen and off. However, the emphasis on exploring a gentler side to the male psyche that women had begun to insist upon also seemed to be parodied by a number of comedies during this period, particularly those which place male characters in traditionally female roles.

Arnold Schwarzenegger made two comical forays around the same time as *Terminator 2* that are illuminating in this respect. In *Kindergarton Cop* (Reitman, 1990) he plays a tough police officer (and divorced father) who is forced to play the role of an undercover infant school teacher and who consequently 'gets in touch' with his emotions. Predating his reconstruction for *Terminator 2* a year later, the film shows a 'new man' hidden within a gruff exterior who, finding himself in a small town in which single parenthood is rife, learns that children from divorced families often feel abandoned and gradually admits to missing his own child. A new romance at the end of the film with a single mum conveniently supplies him with a substitute family and the corresponding opportunity to be a new type of father, one who is emotionally available rather than withdrawn.

Similar territory was explored in *Junior* (Reitman, 1994), a role-reversal comedy in which Schwarzenegger's 'feminine' side takes over. Playing a genetic scientist who experiments on himself, he undergoes a gender transformation via hormones which enable him to carry a baby (hormones being more important than a womb in this case). Opposition is voiced by rival female scientist, Diane (Emma Thompson), who states: 'You don't think men have enough cards – you want to take this away from us as well?' Such explicitly feminist concerns are reversed and ridiculed within the context of the film, however, as when Schwarzenegger refuses to terminate his unnatural 'pregnancy' by loudly stating, in a subversion of the pro-abortion slogan, 'My body, my choice!' Having seized control of reproductive rights, he also co-opts and confuses issues that have not only been a serious priority for the women's movement, but which have increasingly been undermined in reality.

The notion of 'femininity' is also parodied in *Junior*, with Schwarzenegger dressed in drag and re-named Alexandra, struggling to cope with being emotional and tearful – a victim of female hormones. After voicing concerns that s/he will be a good mother, a maternity clinic shrink sums up the point of the film, stating: 'I think we have to dispense with the myth that some of us are born as natural mothers and some are not.' With the idea of 'natural mothers' dispensed with gender roles themselves become questionable, yet these are ultimately reclaimed in *Junior*, with all characters returning to 'traditional' gender roles by the end of the film, just as Schwarzenegger would return to the macho roles that he was previously associated with after this film. Nevertheless, his 'feminisation' during this period remains interesting because the foundations of his role in *Terminator 2* are laid in *Kindergarton Cop* and merely reprised in *Junior*, with Schwarzenegger learning in each film to be more caring because of his connection with children. As a scientist, he is cold and emotionless until a new life grows inside him; as a cop, he is tough and insensitive until children bring out the best in him; and in

Terminator 2 he is a ruthless killer who is similarly reformed, even saved, by pubescent youth, John Connor. In all three examples masculinity is modified yet also crucially salvaged.

In a key scene in the Director's Cut of *Terminator 2*, Sarah Connor attempts to destroy the learning chip housed inside the cyborg's skull rather than use it to their advantage – a telling comment perhaps on the brand of feminism Haraway argues against in her Manifesto: too ready to consign technology to patriarchy and thus condemn it rather than harness its potential. Yet even at the age of thirteen, John Connor easily over-rules his mother, exhibiting both foresight and authority in opting to reprogram the cyborg instead. The T-800 consequently learns how to be a good father, supervised by his adoptive son, and through their relationship the formerly malevolent cyborg and errant teenager are each redeemed. Neither one is truly 'born to be bad' after all, and in taking responsibility John not only learns to channel his leadership abilities, but also performs the function of what Sarah Harwood refers to as 'the child redeemer' who 'aims to transform a dystopian family into a utopian, fixed one'.[17]

Yet critics have disagreed on whether the family offered in *Terminator 2* is truly progressive. Jonathan Goldberg argues, for example, that 'the film may believe that it has reconstituted the family . . . [but] father is a cyborg, mother perhaps a lesbian, and the kid is part juvenile delinquent, part computer hacker; a bushy-tailed white version of the black computer technician that the movie abjects'.[18] We shall return to this purportedly abjected figure, Miles Dyson (Joe Morton), in a later discussion, and dismiss the ludicrous 'lesbian' comment entirely. What is immediately pertinent in Goldberg's appraisal is his description of John Connor as 'part juvenile delinquent, part computer hacker' because these are precisely the qualities the film celebrates. His lawlessness – exhibited by playing truant and stealing from ATMs – is a trait that will ensure both his own survival and that of humanity itself, demonstrating self-sufficiency as well as technical ability. While such criminal activity seems to contradict John's position as hero of the future, this only serves to bolster his already ambiguous characterisation; effacing traditional gender distinctions in being more authoritative than his substitute cyborg father, and more nurturing than his mother. However, John is also not a quite adult and has not yet learned to put away childish things. His tears serve as markers of human vulnerability, first appearing in response to his mother's seeming indifference and finally betraying his own emotional attachment to a machine at the end of the film – an attachment that we are supposed to share.

The sentimentality displayed by John also has clear commercial imperatives, for the film upholds a moral stance towards killing at his behest, thereby reducing the film's violent content, enabling it to pass a 15 certificate and consequently allowing wider box-office appeal.[19] He is thus not only a borderline character in terms of his age and character, he is also the locus by which all the film's transitions are able to take place.

RoboCop franchise follows a similar metamorphosis, from a violent original that had to be heavily cut for television broadcast, to eventually becoming a spin-off series aimed at children. It is almost as if, perhaps in order to justify the interest

children already had in *RoboCop* and *Terminator*, each narrative had to be suitably recreated for this audience. The inclusion of child protagonists is in keeping with such aims, as are the relationships they form with cyborg figures. While *Terminator 2* features a fatherless adolescent male who acquires a cyborg substitute, *RoboCop 3* presents a younger girl, orphaned by corporate greed, who becomes fostered by the real-life equivalent of the *RoboCop* doll she once owned. Both Cyberdine Systems and OCP (the companies responsible for creating each cyborg) are thus vindicated, for while their actions have led to the loss of parents, the cyborg fathers produced are portrayed as ample compensation, with a wish-fulfilment fantasy played out in each film that overshadows the political implications of their originals. Hence, although the threat of nuclear war remains in *Terminator 2*, its possibility is effaced by the 'no fate' message inscribed in the narrative and symbolised by the reformed terminator. Similarly, in *RoboCop 3*, the Capitalist corporation that was so effectively satirised in the original *RoboCop* becomes bizarrely redeemed because it has produced a moral guardian in its cyborg that is able to rid Detroit of an evil Japanese scourge which threatened the very bed-rock of American national identity: the family home. Nostalgia and sentiment thus combine to reappropriate the cyborg as heroic, and dehumanisation becomes revered rather than feared.

This ideological transition is most evident in Sarah Connor's speech praising the terminator as the best of all fathers, in which she not only forms a new relationship with technology, but a new appraisal of humanity as infinitely more fallible. As her voice-over states:

> Watching John with the machine, it was suddenly so clear. The terminator would never stop, it would never leave him, and it would never hurt him, never shout at him, or get drunk and hit him. Or say it was too busy to spend time with him. It would always be there, and it would die to protect him. Of all the would-be fathers that came and went over the years, this 'thing', this machine, was the only one who measured up. In an insane world it was the sanest choice.

Sarah Connor's estimation of the machine that made her son fatherless in the first place sums up a familiar list of paternal failures, yet her approval is only given because, as Kevin Pask puts it, the terminator's death-drive is retooled as its 'daddy-drive'.[20] The miraculous rather than murderous potential of new technology is thus underlined and 'real' fathers left wanting against a seemingly impossible ideal. Indeed, John appears to construct the very father he has been denied in real life, creating not only a playmate and protector but a means of providing himself with a positive male role model, one who will enable him to become a man and thus extricate himself from his mother's ostensibly negative influence.

Their relationship is short-lived, however, for as events transpire the terminator does eventually die in order to protect John – and the rest of humanity. Yet this very act of independence contradicts the faith placed in technology's trustworthiness, ironically undermining the film's intentions. The nobility of the T-800's self-immolation

at the end of the film is a grand gesture, but one that is troubling precisely because he has defied orders in doing so and abandoned the 'son' he meant to protect, seemingly for his own good. Harwood has contended that all fathers are paradoxical figures who function both as a threat to the family and a diffuser of that threat, arguing that even those who are represented as successful in the paternal role invariably 'jeopardise their own investment'.[21] *Terminator 2* concurs with this assessment by rendering the final proof of T-800's goodness to be its self-elimination. Indeed, just as he proves his worth (and his deference to human values) by sacrificing himself, so Miles Dyson, the T-800's own technological 'father', must also seemingly die as a final act of paternal responsibility.

We first encounter Dyson working at home on his computer, too busy to concern himself with his family, as evidenced by his wife asking: 'How about spending some time with your other babies?'[22] Ironically, just as he agrees to a family day out, technology further invades the home in the form of gunshots fired by Sarah Connor, intent on assassinating him, followed by the T-800 (and John), aiming to prevent her, and finally the T-1000. The film's critique of fatherhood takes place on a number of levels in this scene, with Dyson portrayed as a terrified Frankenstein figure, confronted for the first time with the monster he has inadvertently helped to create. Sarah Connor's speech at this point about the role of motherhood being envied by destructive men is virtually a parody of feminist diatribe, and Dyson is duly blamed for helping to create the future that threatens mankind.

Yet if Dyson is technically the terminator's 'father' in designing the cyborg's hardware, then John Connor plays a more traditionally 'feminine' role in providing the software of socialisation, teaching the T-800 humane values such as not to kill. By taking charge of the situation when his mother breaks down after her speech, John additionally shows himself to be a 'new man' in the making, choosing communication over violence as he orders the T-800 to explain to Dyson the human consequence of his designs. Dyson responds by not only helping to destroy his work but also sacrifices himself so that his family, and the rest of humanity, might live – an act which is both imitated and eclipsed by the terminator's own sacrifice at the end of the film.[23] While John Connor once again becomes a fatherless boy by the film's end, implying that such ties need to be severed for him to become his own man, his own 'father' in adulthood, Dyson's much younger children are lost in the bigger picture of their father's sacrifice. Ironically then, in aligning familial responsibility with ethical integrity, yet another family becomes divested of a father in order to be 'saved'.

Just as we are given to understand that Dyson's status as a 'family man' is what provides him with the necessary moral reasoning to 'do the right thing', so *RoboCop*'s Alex Murphy seems to have been deliberately chosen by OCP officials because, as we are informed, he is 'a devout Irish–Catholic family man' with 'a fierce sense of duty'. The morality 'programmed' into him by religious beliefs and the social responsibility of fatherhood thus clearly separate him from those deemed likely to become criminals in the narrative's scenario. In fact, family values are retained, even beyond death, in the memories that haunt him; as is

made evident in the scene where he revisits his former family home in *RoboCop 2*. The house is now up for sale and his family, mere ghosts (replayed in the home video memories of his mind). That his former wife has moved on because he has been forced to reject her, having been harshly reminded by a company employee that he could never offer her 'a man's love', testifies to their brutality and to his own attendant demasculinisation. His fragmented self cannot be united until he acquires a new family in *RoboCop 3* – who are better equipped to support him than their predecessors.

Murphy's surrogate 'wife', Dr Lazarus (Jill Hennessy), is aptly named for she not only resurrects him when his damaged circuitry fails but also gives him the ability to fly.[24] Unlike Dr Faxx, the female scientist in *RoboCop 2* who is ruthlessly ambitious, Lazarus has a social conscience that is stronger than her interest in climbing the corporate ladder at OCP and even forfeits her career in defending Murphy's identity, becoming fired when she refuses to wipe his memory. She is subsequently recruited to the cause against OCP by another victim of their greed, Nikko – a child whose parents were killed by the company because they lived in an area selected for redevelopment. Both Nikko and Lazarus prove themselves to be capable guerrilla activists and, like the scene in *Terminator 2* in which John expertly reloads artillery in the back of a moving car for mother and surrogate father in a bizarre incarnation of the survivalist family, Murphy's new family show that they have what it takes to survive, being tough enough to take care of themselves and sufficiently technically minded to both accept him for the cyborg he has become and to provide vital help in thwarting OCP's plans.

Self-sufficiency and technological ability are clear evolutionary advantages for children planning to make it into the new bad future, and while John utilises technology to his advantage (from swindling ATMs for an instant allowance to reprogramming a terminator for his protection), Nikko's lap-top functions as a magic box, enabling her to make the ED 209 robot 'loyal as a puppy'. She thus takes *Terminator 2*'s 'retraining' to an absurd extreme, yet performs the same narrative function of proving her ability as a techno-kid.[25] Like John, Nikko has a cyborg of her own to become her surrogate father, together with a new mother in Dr Lazarus who can nurture her seemingly innate affinity with technology.[26] Not only do these figures offer younger members of the audience someone to identify with, they also affirm abilities deemed most valuable for survival.[27] However, the idea that empowerment comes through technology is also dangerously simplistic, and as loaded with contradictions as the wider narrative concerns of each film.

In *Terminator 2*'s case there are notable inconsistencies in the film's pro-gun yet seemingly pacifist leanings. As Kevin Pask puts it: 'The film's thematisation of its own technology . . . is responsible for the short-circuitry of its own explicitly anti-technological "pro-life" message.'[28] Not only does it celebrate technology in its use of special effects, effectively showcased by the T-1000, the film also relies on weaponry to defend against this foe, as well as any humans that get in the way. John Connor may draw the line at allowing his cyborg (or his mother) to kill people, but he has no problem with maiming and the very act of reloading artillery and otherwise participating in the fetishisation of guns apparent in

Terminator 2 upholds a troubling militarism that is seriously at odds with any anti-war stance the film struggles to adopt.

RoboCop 3 similarly works to dismantle the ideas of its premise and upholds an equally problematic view of gunpower in defence of the family. It begins with an expository sequence that pays homage to the original film, with a TV ad for Delta City (OCP's planned venture) envisaged as a utopia where, as the ad-line declares: 'crime no longer exists and dreams come true – for our children'. Yet OCP's plans are far from family-friendly, as subsequent scenes of enforced resettlement show, with existing families forcibly separated in a sequence reminiscent of the holocaust. The cost of urban development, we are told, is actual human lives, like those of Nikko's parents, yet this is not simply an extension of the first film's ruthlessly Capitalist milieu. Instead, the Japanese take-over of OCP indicates a return to 'yellow peril' fears of the 1930s, with the 'evil' Kanemitsu Corporation threatening both domestic life and economic security.[29] As with *Terminator 2*, a child's-eye view of the world not only mitigates the consequences of a dystopian future but seemingly prevents it, with Nikko using her lap-top to infiltrate the TV networks. Lazarus lets America know what has been done to the residents of Cadillac Heights, and OCP stock promptly drops to nothing, leading to financial collapse.[30]

The problem with such a denouement, of course, is its sheer unlikelihood. Like the renegades of *The Running Man* (Glaser, 1987) who take over network transmission to tell people the truth, the result is another simplistic celebration of technology as a means of achieving social change. Why would those investing in corporate shares care about the human cost of development if it means a profit is ensured? A faith is invested in humanity, even at the corporate level, that makes such films infantile, defusing any radical potential their originals once had.

Defection by the police stretches credulity still further, instigated by Sergeant Reed (Robert Do'Qui) who defiantly states: 'Driving people out of their homes is no work for a cop.' OCP executive, Johnson (Felton Perry), responds by threatening Reed with dismissal, going on to suggest: 'Maybe instead of worrying about these squatters you might think about your own family.' The strategy backfires however, as Reed responds: 'I am. I'm thinking I'll have to go home and face them.' He then hands in his badge and walks out of the station, followed by the entire squad who are all equally willing to place ethics above their own livelihoods.[31] These are good cops, who cannot be bought or blackmailed, who put the welfare of others before their own – an ideal police force that is almost as perfect as the families we have seen.

The coalition formed between these former officers and the ousted residents of Cadillac Heights forms a revolutionary offensive that not only has the law neatly on its side, but which utilises familial discourse to idealise social relations. Only those who have families are truly seen to care and although, as in *Terminator 2*, the carnage is moved off-screen, violence in the name of the family still underpins the residents' victory. Indeed, just as the stake-out in Miles Dyson's home places choices about the future within a domestic arena, so *RoboCop 3* stages its final confrontation on the streets that are literally being fought over, with

residents defending family homes, as the Delta City adverts declare, 'for our children'.

However, both films replace political and economic issues with reassurances about humanity's inherent good will: Dyson personalises Cyberdine Systems into a family man who, like *RoboCop 3*'s defiant sergeant, gets his priorities right. Yet the sacrifice Dyson makes, like the OCP shareholders who put compassion before profit, asserts simplistic homilies about the moralising influence of the family. While the point underlining each film is that we must 'invest' in our children's future if humanity is to survive, it fails to adequately convince, just as family values may initially appear to sum up the best of who we are – a short-hand for gauging and evoking humanity – yet which effectively obscures a more realistic depiction of human relations.

This is not to argue that all forms of entertainment demand realism, for clearly we need our dreams and ideals, but not at the expense of recognising that the family has become a smoke-screen that diverts attention from more urgent problems – problems that demand wide-scale, politically implemented yet ethically sanctioned solutions. The celebration of family structures within popular cultural representations pointedly ignores such issues and seems designed to reassure audiences that humanity has what it takes to survive in an unknown future if it can retain the essential qualities of heart and hearth, particularly if it can domesticate new technologies.

In positioning itself within the home, the cinematic cyborg plugs specific gaps in the social fabric, whether it be providing a son to a childless couple or a substitute for absent fathers. Yet it is also through accommodating the cyborg within such familiarising scenarios that specific cultural anxieties are alleviated. William R. Macauley and Angel J. Gordo-Lopez have argued that it is through humanising cyborgs that Barthes' notion of 'inoculation' can be seen to take effect.[32] Barthes used this term in his work *Mythologies* (1957) to describe how the media deliver small doses of potentially subversive material to audiences in order to 'immunise' the collective imagination from radical ideas.[33] Macauley and Gordo-Lopez additionally borrow from Bruno Latour's concept of 'purification' in order to claim that hybrid forms such as the cyborg are deliberately emptied of ambiguity within popular representations in order to conform with 'pre-existing cultural practices'.[34] The cyborg's potential ability to disrupt conventional ideas surrounding such institutions as the family is thus mediated via a process of incorporation rather than exclusion. However, some of the fractures and fissures within the social body that the newly sanitised cyborg aims to 'purify' defy such incorporation, particularly where held to be a threat. To extend the familial metaphor, where cyborgs are deemed to be ideologically illegitimate, or otherwise threatening to the social order, the result is termination.

The female cyborg of *Eve of Destruction* is a case in point. A variation on the legacy of bad cyborgs as the result of poor parenthood, the film admits the realities of a dysfunctional upbringing in blaming the paternal abuse experienced by scientist, Eve Simmons, for having created a site of repressed anger within her – one that later becomes manifested in her cyborg offspring. Yet although

a partial critique is made of the father in question and the military programme responsible for having created Eve VIII as a living weapon, ultimately it is the cyborg herself who must pay. No family site can redeem her, and Simmons is problematically forced to destroy her creation (and the past she represents) so that she herself may be reborn. Unlike Murphy, whose memory determines his recovery, Simmons must learn to repress her past, for she has no happy family memories and, indeed, this is largely her trouble. Good motherhood, like fatherhood, necessitates sacrifice and only through relinquishing her rage can she devote herself to her young son. Finding the right balance for appropriate maternal behaviour is what is at issue here, for the bad or negligent mother has become as much a focus of blame as poor fathers. Within the heterosexual paradigm symbolised by the conventional nuclear family, the mother's main role is to service patriarchy and Simmons does so by eliminating her 'man-hating' alter ego. Eve VIII dies not only because she cannot fit into the existing family, but because she is a threat to it. Yet although Simmons seemingly capitulates to male authority in placing her son before her illegitimate cyborg daughter, the decision is framed as an ethical responsibility undertaken for the benefit of all.

The choice given to other female characters in terms of their reproductive rights in the cyborg film makes an interesting contrast. Sarah Connor, for all her speeches about the failures of men, and despite telling Reese in the first film: 'I didn't ask for this "honour" and I don't want any of it!', nevertheless fulfils her narrative function of giving birth to John and subsequently pushing him towards his own seemingly inevitable destiny as a great leader of the future. Although she also has a higher purpose in *Terminator 2*, which is no less a feat than to save the world, she pursues this mission as if literally programmed herself, even to the exclusion of being close to her son. Indeed, she virtually follows Bly by the book in discouraging John's emotional ties to her – an act which is disapproved of in the film yet which crucially makes the T-800 all the more endearing by comparison. Hilary Radner even goes so far as to assert that Sarah and John effectively 'make a mother of him',[35] with the terminator having to substitute for Sarah's ostensible lack of maternal feeling. Only when she sees the Dyson family cower in terror before her does Sarah realise what she has become, acknowledge her repressed maternal emotions, and finally embrace her son.

The reconciliation between mother and son is made possible by the terminator's re-entry into their lives and this figure also helps to restore faith not only in technology, but in humanity's potential ability to avoid annihilation, a point that is affirmed by Sarah in the last lines of the film as she asserts: 'The unknown future rolls towards us, and for the first time I face it with hope. Because if a machine, a terminator, can learn the value of human life, then maybe we can too.' The hope the T-800 has inspired in her is ironic, given their antagonism in the first film, yet also because the cyborg is again presented as superior to humanity, this time in its ability to learn. Forest Pyle summarises the logic of the film by stating: 'There would seem to be nothing more human than "learning" – particularly a moral and ethical learning – and *T2* cultivates further than its predecessor this humanist position.'[36]

Accordingly, the possibility of achieving social change is indicated via the transformations each of the film's protagonists undergo, providing a nuclear age nuclear family fighting against a determinist view of the future. Yet certain transitions remain limited by gender, as is proven by Sarah, for underneath her musculature, her military attire, and her emotionless expression, underneath her 'somewhat strange surface' she is a mother – first and foremost – who learns to recognise this fact and behave accordingly. In fact she is forced to, for in a scene shown in the Director's Cut her son reproves her apparent aloofness by warning that she is liable to 'wind up a bitch'. Like the T-800 that she parallels, Sarah becomes 're-humanised' within the family unit and adheres to the maternal role given to her, which seemingly necessitates not only embracing but also deferring to her son – the genuine (if modified) patriarch of the film. Clearly, no matter how precarious 'the unknown future' may appear, the certainty of specific family values are all too obvious. Yet exceptions, as ever, remain, and back in 1990 a monstrous birth both anticipated and opposed such narrative inclinations, refusing to sentimentalise either technology or humanity, with a female protagonist who defies the maternal role given to her.

Released a year before *Terminator 2*, *Hardware* (Richard Stanley, 1990) refutes virtually all of its ideals. While it incorporates familial discourse, it forsakes any real hope for the future, firmly denouncing man–machine symbiosis as heralding anything more than suicide of the species. The film thus offers a compelling contrast to the sentimentality prevalent in later cyborg narratives. Indeed, it's heroine, Jill (Stacey Travis) sums up *Hardware*'s repudiation of family values by rejecting even the prospect of having children in an uncertain future as 'stupid, sadistic and suicidal'. While Sarah Connor fulfils her allotted function as 'mother of the future', and Dr Lazarus forfeits her career to be part of her adopted family, Jill stands in clear contrast to both.

Hardware's origins as a low-budget British production undoubtedly contributed to its refreshingly different perspective, and although deliberately intended as a pastiche of commercial SF and horror elements, including a rampaging robot and tough heroine,[37] the film nevertheless has an originality and conviction that surpass its derivative nature. Set in the aftermath of a nuclear war, the future is overcrowded, poisonous and without hope, populated by scavengers infected by an irradiated environment. The action takes place within the cramped interior of a domestic apartment in which Christmas Day marks the birth of a new life and the advent of apocalypse. The 'life' in question is a prototype military droid named the Mark 13, who cyborg soldier Mo (Dylan McDermott) unwittingly brings home to his girlfriend, Jill. Created by the US military, the Mark 13 is designed to enforce sterilisation as part of the government's Population Control Bill, and does so by literal extermination.

The droid thus reflects state control over citizens in the most intimate of areas. It also functions as Mo and Jill's symbolic offspring, reactivating itself after witnessing their lovemaking and proceeding to hunt them down. A fast learner, influenced by all the wrong role models, it exterminates Mo and pursues Jill until she eventually learns how to obliterate it. To suggest that she performs a retroactive

abortion does not seem like an overstatement in the light of the film's obvious concerns with issues of reproduction. Unlike the T-800, there is no chance of redemption, for the Mark 13 is designed for one purpose and will never learn the value of human life, which appears to be a redundant concept in *Hardware*'s future. As Cynthia Fuchs points out, the child tied to its dead mother at the top of the stairs near Jill's apartment symbolises the death of the family, even for those who can bear children.[38] There is no guarantee for survival, no kinship, and next to no chance of anything improving.

Against the values propounded by the likes of *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3*, it is a bleak and somewhat nihilistic message, yet one that articulates politically grounded issues, particularly in an ending in which we are informed that the Mark 13 is about to go into mass production. The literal redundancy of humanity is underlined by the cyborg's impending manufacture, created not as an accident of evolution but via a deliberate process of social engineering. In its denunciation of governmental oppression and individual apathy, *Hardware* undermines the ideals of later cyborg narratives, questioning whether a retrofitted nuclear family is really the answer to an uncertain future, or merely a ruse that invests in the most traditional of ideas to dispel fears against where we are heading. By providing a cyborg that unsettles rather than amuses, the film stands as an innovative contrast to the sentiment that followed, yet perhaps *Hardware*'s most interesting innovation is that it presents a nightmare vision of the family in order to destroy it, and significantly makes a female responsible for doing so.

Jill gives life to Mark 13 by welding its parts together, yet from the moment it is 'born' it threatens both herself and the rest of humanity, thereby confirming her original claim that procreation, within the context of the film, is irresponsible. This monstrous offspring must be destroyed at all cost and Jill finally sources the courage to do so. Yet her maternal abstinence unwittingly concurs with state policy, an irony that is underscored by the film's writer and director, Richard Stanley, who has asserted that the film is primarily about 'sexual politics' in terms of the choices Jill makes – arguing that both abortion and war serve essentially the same purpose in curtailing population growth.[39] *Hardware*'s cynicism derives from this problematic stance and while other cyborg families are almost uniformly life-affirming, it offers relatively little hope. In a direct contradiction of 'family values' – and despite having been programmed by humans – the droid learns only how to destroy lives, thus serving as a monstrous projection of humanity's darkest traits and suggesting that these will only be exacerbated by technology. Although admittedly fatalistic compared with all that would follow, it serves to remind us of the conceit often utilised via cyborg films, which seeks to argue that destructive elements can be recuperated via the family, or quelled with a flick of the right switch.

Reproductive rights are also clearly apparent in the *Alien* films, with Ripley's role as a surrogate mother in *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986) summed up by Thomas Doherty who argues that: 'Newt gives Ripley a culturally permissible way for a woman to fight and kill, not for her own satisfaction or career advancement, but for her children.'[40] However, Newt (Carrie Henn) is swiftly killed off at the

beginning of *Alien 3* (David Fincher, 1992) – along with the idealised family unit Cameron had neatly packaged for audiences at the close of *Aliens* – and as Ripley discovers she has a new life growing inside her in the shape of an alien queen, maternal instincts become sacrificed for the sake of humanity as a whole. Terminating this unwanted pregnancy necessitates ending her own life and she elects to throw herself, on the brink of this monstrous birth, into a molten pit, thus echoing the fate of the T-800. It is a gesture made particularly poignant not only because of Newt's death and Ripley's advancing age, but because a Company representative attempts to persuade her that she may still have the chance of motherhood if she allows them to intervene and extract the alien from her. Amy Taubin cogently asserts that the film speaks of repressed maternal fears, of 'being pregnant with a monster, or being forced to carry a foetus you don't want to term, or never being able to have a baby though you desperately want one'.[41]

Ripley's heroic sacrifice stems from a patent lack of choice in terms of reproductive rights, and *Alien: Resurrection* (Jeunet, 1997) reiterates this point in denying her the right to even decide upon terminating her own life. Reborn through the Company's cloning experiments, having had the alien's genes involuntarily extracted from her, Ripley's predicament encapsulates a nightmare scenario of breeding programmes and enforced surrogacy in which she is thoroughly exploited. These conditions both reverse and extend the state control of procreation from which *Hardware* takes its premise, demonstrating how reproductive technologies being developed today may be used to limit, rather than advance, the choices available for women. Taking a stand, Ripley 8 witnesses the birth of her own part human-part alien child and, like Jill, performs a belated abortion, creating a rupture in the ship that sucks the new-born out into space. As Michael Eaton comments of this scene, 'its end product of minced up tissue fragments, blood and bone, cannot but recall a Right to Life campaign. Except that here abortion is seen as deliverance, not for Ripley, but for the whole human race'.[42]

The scene makes an ambiguous comment on abortion, as does Ripley 8's 'humane' killing of her clone predecessors, which is equally relevant to the current controversy surrounding human fertilisation experiments and embryology, with Ripley herself being viewed as a 'by-product', like the embryos used in stem cell research whose existence is deemed to be equally inconsequential.[43] Hence, despite appearing to sanction abortion, the film also appears to criticise technological interventions in human life, with Ripley 8 serving as both surrogate mother and dehumanised offspring to a heedless yet seemingly omniscient organisation, questioning whether new reproductive technologies will help or hinder women's rights over their own bodies and asking pertinent questions about maternal sacrifice, responsibility and choice.

Such issues are all too relevant today, with women having starkly disparate rights around the world in terms of controlling their fertility. Indeed, it is a curious testimony of the differing expectations placed upon male and female roles within the family (and society at large) that while men are now fighting for greater parental rights such as securing paternity leave and gaining custody of children, many women still battle against the notion that their primary function in society

is to have children. Our understanding of parental roles and family kinship networks is likely to become still more complex as the century advances and ever more diverse parenting arrangements occur, yet to what extent our current notion of 'family values' will alter accordingly seems doubtful.

Even now, despite changes in its structure, the family remains a powerful metaphor of social stability and decency, and is the primary site for reinforcing moral values, socialising future citizens and mobilising ideological debate. However, while 'family values' are generally applied as a short-hand articulation of all that is deemed wholesome, proper and 'good' in terms of humanity, they demand closer consideration. In fact family values, as they are conventionally used, reiterate a sub-text in which men are positioned as the head of the household and reproductive rights are controlled by patriarchy. The very fact that the term is frequently invoked in anti-abortion rhetoric and, in some cases, wholesale condemnation of birth control, is ample reason to be cautious of its intent. Family values, thus utilised, hide a multitude of sins under the ideal of a harmonious site of mutual affirmation and unconditional love, and have been used to excuse activities ranging from domestic violence to military intervention abroad. Such negative inferences are rarely acknowledged because the appeal of the family as a symbol of togetherness and, more specifically, as a universal human experience, endures. Indeed, the phrase itself and the ideal it sums up are so emotionally charged that they are continually repeated within popular culture and political treatise alike without sufficient interrogation of their wider implications, or continued relevance. The discourse of familism thus becomes perpetuated, albeit necessarily altered over time in order to sustain its credibility.

The 1990s was clearly a period when such amendments were deemed necessary and as Hollywood cinema began to reflect the changing shape of the family during this period, it also modified fathers in order to better fit new family structures. While there is much that is positive about such revisions, the cultural context for these developments is also important to note, for despite mothers increasingly heading families in social reality, fictional narratives seemed intent on preserving male figures as their focal point of interest. Cinematic depictions of new cyborg fathers who are better able to express emotions and bond with children have thus been viewed by some critics as attempting to legitimate patriarchy's ideological dominance by providing figures that lack traditional authority, yet who displace women's narrative position nevertheless.

Indeed, in the cinematic examples we have seen, it is mothers who appear to be disenfranchised, for despite a new model of the family evidenced by single mothers such as Sarah Connor, an adolescent male is revealed to be at the helm of the Connor household. Additionally, although masculinity is shown to be multifaceted in the films discussed, portrayed as capable of both strength and sensitivity in seemingly progressive representations, female characters tend to resort to the familiar biological imperative of fulfilling their maternal function. How such depictions are interpreted remains open to question. That a former terminator manages to sustain a relationship of greater intimacy with John Connor than the boy's own mother, and that it is *RoboCop 3*'s Murphy who is seen to stroke the

head of sleeping orphan Nikko (while her surrogate mom simply looks on) could either be read as a progressive articulation of sympathetic males newly able to connect with others, or, more negatively, as male encroachment on female territory.

Harwood adopts the latter viewpoint, arguing that new representations of paternity in Hollywood cinema are 'merely an upgraded version of the old patriarch, willing to incorporate a more complete integrated "feminine" side within the old masculine codes of the symbolic'.[44] Like Haraway's denunciation of male 'gentleness' as seemingly inauthentic, such a contention is highly pessimistic in its implications, failing to acknowledge that the traditional concept of masculinity can (and must) be revised if gender stereotypes are ever to be dismantled. Harwood's misgivings about Hollywood's new fathers can be explained by the psychoanalytic framework she adopts, which codes all male figures as symbolic fathers and thus reiterates the 'old patriarch' she herself insists on perpetuating. The ostensible lack of power held by fictional fathers in Hollywood films of the 1980s and 1990s is consequently accused of reinventing patriarchy in order to repudiate feminist criticism and retain men's foothold in the family at the expense of women. Harwood thus argues that although paternal authority was ceded to child figures in Hollywood cinema, the father remained a primary figure 'while the mother was edged out of the frame'.[45]

It serves as a partial corroboration of this assertion that the child protagonists evaluated in this chapter each exercise their newfound authority by not only reassembling the family, but additionally securing the father's place within it. Just as *Look Who's Talking* (Heckerling, 1989) asks unborn child Mikey (voiced by Bruce Willis) to select the 'right' substitute father for his single mum, so the cyborg films of the 1990s place the onus on children to put together their own family. John Connor effectively chooses his own father, while Nikko reunites Murphy and Lazarus to take care of her. The lack of sexual interest between these surrogate parents has the added bonus of allowing them to properly focus on the child in question without the threat of conflicting entanglements forming between them. Yet although these new families are created by children, the results are far from utopian. In fact, despite re-uniting an estranged family, *Terminator 2*'s family values seem like empty gestures and the result is a curiously hollow film, lacking the heart of the original. Even its most moral character, John Connor, callously refers to his foster parents as 'dicks' and fails to mourn their deaths, just as Nikko conveniently forgets her 'real' parents and appears untraumatised by their loss. Both children indicate the extent to which emotions must be sacrificed in order to head each cyborg household, imbuing their surrogate fathers with trust while taking their traditional place as the focal element of the modern family. As Sobchack asserts: 'If Dad has to be figured as an innocent child to represent the "hope" and "promise" of an unimaginable future for patriarchy . . . he also has to give up his patriarchal power, his "authority", to his children.'[46] The 'mothers' in such narratives, meanwhile, play supporting roles that lack the authority of the children or the endearing quality of cyborg fathers, and while their presence is crucial in developing the narrative action towards a happy conclusion, they are relegated to the margins nonetheless.

However, these women are far from passive and although both Sobchack and Harwood would contend that the depiction of cyborg fathers is used to convince audiences that patriarchy no longer poses a threat, there is much more to these characterisations than this. While both *Terminator 2*'s reprogrammed T-800 and *RoboCop 3*'s Murphy demonstrate the benefits of having a big strong 'man' around who is able to defend the family against attack, these figures are not invulnerable icons of masculinity but figures who are capable of being injured or killed; who work alongside female partners without prejudice; and who display a particular sensitivity towards children; thereby representing a positive departure from traditional 'macho' characterisations. Moreover, although Sarah Connor and Dr Lazarus take a far less prominent role, they provide essential skills (both combative and technical) that helps to secure victory for both their respective causes.

These are by no means ideal representations, yet fictional cyborg families may nevertheless help us to reconceptualise the traditional model of the family and its associated roles for men and women, and perhaps even inspire us to imagine alternatives. After all, there is little to be gained from undue fatalism regarding the irrevocable nature of patriarchy, or in viewing motherhood as intrinsically repressive. As Helene Cixous summarises 'one trend of current feminist thought tends to denounce a trap in maternity', claiming that it renders 'woman an agent who is more or less the accomplice of reproduction: capitalist, familialist, phallocentrist reproduction'.[47] However, rather than viewing this as inevitable, Cixous asserts that 'it will be the task of woman and man to make the old relationship and all its consequences out-of-date; to think the launching of a new subject into life, with defamilialization'.[48]

The cinematic cyborg family may be regarded as performing just such a task by not only broaching collaborative possibilities between male cyborgs and female partners, but through equipping reconstructed males with a caring disposition towards children. The critics that have viewed these non-traditional male figures as an attempt to efface patriarchy's continued power appear to have dismissed the progressive potential of such characterisations entirely. In contending that SF's father figures had to be infantilised in order to legitimate patriarchy, Sobchack upholds Harwood's view that these characters, far from being positive examples of 'new men', are little more than 'backlash patriarchs'[49] – designed to reverse the gains made by feminism. Such claims appear to perpetuate the problems within feminist criticism, as noted in Chapter 4, of being unable to relinquish a negative view of men while also regarding any attempt to reconceive masculinity with undue suspicion. For example, Susan Jeffords asserts that masculinity was revised in cinematic narratives of the 1990s in order to falsely position white men as the victims of a social and cultural system from which they have largely benefited, dismissing any sign of vulnerability as a strategy aimed at eliciting sympathy.[50] Such detractions reveal clear hostility to non-macho roles because they disrupt the conventional portrayal of patriarchy as monstrous and invulnerable – indicating an avowed reluctance to credit men with the ability to change, or to view masculinity as a multiple identity.

The narratives discussed explore precisely this possibility, yet their reconstructed men are also clearly designed to be more appealing to women. While this in itself may be no bad thing, in fact it would seem essential if alliances are ever to be forged between men and women, it is also the case that the confusion and vulnerability evoked by male cyborgs works to elicit sympathy and support from female characters. For example, it is because *Universal Soldier*'s Luc Devreux is so childlike and helpless that hard-nosed female journalist, Ally Walker (Veronica Roberts), develops a sense of protectiveness towards him, one that she eventually prioritises over reporting his story. Similarly, *RoboCop 3*'s Dr Lazarus puts her feelings for Murphy, who so patently needs her, before her own career. In each case the respective female is deemed to have made the right ethical choice in allowing what are portrayed as maternal (rather then strictly romantic) feelings to take priority.

Terminator 2 makes this thematic strategy explicit, for while Sarah's approval of the T-800 underlines the extent to which she believes he has changed, she has an additional narrative task in proving herself to be a good mother, being forced to acknowledge that, if she is to avoid the destructive rage that Eve Simmons falls prey to, she must provide her son with the mother he needs. Yet even in doing so, Sarah's status is superseded by the new cyborg dad her son bonds with. As Fred Pfeil asserts: 'It is obviously *not* Linda Hamilton who is the big star of *Terminator 2*, but Arnold Schwarzenegger, nor is it Sarah Connor who, for all her sterling efforts, is finally able to save the world.'[51] Ultimately Connor's role, like that of Lazarus and Walker, is upstaged by the male cyborg she assists, yet whether this is indicative of patriarchal fears of growing female emancipation is uncertain.

Pfeil contends that the film plays with border crossings only to 'redraw the lines of the old nuclear family system as the last best line of defence' against change.[52] As was indicated by a number of films of the period, such changes were a clear concern, with lost or endangered paternal rights featuring in such films as *Falling Down* (Schumacher, 1992), *The Fan* (Scott, 1996) and *The Full Monty* (Cattaneo, 1996) – all of which focus on disenfranchised male characters who have been made redundant and lost access to their families. In both *Falling Down* and *The Fan* the resulting anger, frustration and mental instability poses a danger to the families from which these men are ousted, while *The Full Monty* revises the role-reversal strategy of *Mrs Doubtfire* in asserting that men may have to alter their perception of themselves (and enter areas traditionally marked as 'female') in order to adjust to a changing world.

How *Terminator 3* updates these concerns provides an interesting contrast. In virtual corroboration of the criticisms made by Harwood and others, the film seems to be motivated by a mission to reinstate male authority. Katherine Brewster (Clare Danes) replaces Sarah Connor as the female lead yet also in the maternal duties given to her. Initially presented as an assertive and capable young woman, the film then works to undermine these qualities, with the T-800 notably assisting in this function. In fact, Katherine is proved to be more capable and authoritative than the adult John Connor (Nick Stahl) until the cyborg abducts them. An uncomfortable sense of misogyny becomes discernible at this point, and when the terminator abruptly closes a hatch on her anxious and alarmed face when she

demands to know where she is being taken, the effect is to silence an annoying 'overemotional' woman. (Which is odd considering that he is now programmed with a basic psychology sub-routine to help him on this mission.) Katherine may start the film with a good career, stable relationship and strong family ties, but all three are removed by the end. Furthermore, in offering no resistance to her fate as another 'mother of the future', which she reacts to only with mild amusement, the film shows that as far as female representation goes some twenty years after the first *Terminator*, and with the supposed advent of 'girl power', nothing has really changed.

Sarah Connor's disappearance from *Terminator 3* further proves Harwood's point regarding the absent mother, having seemingly been killed off because she has fulfilled her duty in raising and protecting her son. Director, Jonathan Mostow, explained this decision as motivated by the fact that he could see nowhere new for her character to go, stating that 'the more I got into the script the more I realised the linchpin of the new story is her son, John Connor. Linda would have been a third wheel and that wouldn't have been fair to her or her fans.'[53] More perplexing still is the way in which the film chooses to remember her. We learn that despite the tremendous effort Sarah went to she merely delayed the predicted nuclear war rather than preventing it, consequently failing to change the future, and a similar irony is underscored in having died from leukaemia in the same year that the war was first meant to occur. Despite the dangerous life she lived, and the courage with which she fought to survive, Sarah Connor ultimately dies of natural causes, confirming mortality as a fact of life. The scene at her grave marks the point at which Katherine crucially acquires sympathy for John, yet because Sarah's actions are shown to have been ineffective, and due to the manner in which she died, she is immortalised as a tragic rather than heroic figure, and the factors that led Reece to describe her as a 'legend' are consequently negated.

Katherine effectively replaces Sarah as John's mentor and source of strength. Indeed, the film seems to support the idea that representations of male vulnerability function as a means of negotiating female sympathy, for John not only requires the return of macho Arnie to provide some focus in his life, but also the love of a good woman. Unlike his mother – who admirably sourced the allies and skills necessary to counter Cyberdyne, or Katherine – who appears similarly in control of her life at the beginning of the film, John's existence consists of going from one menial job to the next without direction or connection with others. Manifestly uncertain of himself, and virtually epitomising Bly's notion of the 'soft man', it is this obvious neediness that attracts Katherine towards him. (Alongside the somewhat risible coincidence that they once 'made out' together in high school.) That she is destined to share the same narrative 'mission' as his mother problematically revises the notion that women are defined by biology, and although John bemoans his fate as leader, Katherine raises no objections to her predicted role as his future wife and mother of his children. In fact, in being revealed to have programmed the terminator this time around Katherine ensures that her 'destiny' is preserved. She may also be portrayed as a soldier who will fight beside humanity's leader, but it is in giving birth to children who, we are

told, will play a vital part themselves in the fight against machines, that makes her important.

Katherine may be assertive but her role is effectively subordinated to the male lead destined to become her husband. The shot of her reassuringly taking John's hand in the final scene in the nuclear fall-out shelter may be designed to end the film on an optimistic and romantic note but would have been more progressive if, upon being asked via radio transmission who is in charge, she had not automatically deferred to his newfound authority, yet Katherine is clearly an old-fashioned girl at heart and therefore consistent with the ideology of the film. Despite the absence of the mother, and the death (yet again) of the cyborg father, family values are upheld in *T3* and its final image of a strong partnership that will ultimately provide a new generation of fighters. Even in the uncertain, post-apocalyptic future in which Katherine and John will emerge, the sanctity of marriage vows are maintained, together with their apparent duty to perpetuate the human race (as well as the franchise) for as the T-800 tells them 'later your children become important'. Katherine promises to be an ideal mother-figure, having proven herself to both caring and courageous, and who knows her place is beside her future husband. While Sarah Connor may have been progressive in bearing a child out of wedlock, and raising him on her own, *T3* marks a return to the nuclear family – seemingly the main target of the hateful T-X.

The third instalment of the *Terminator* franchise accordingly undoes much of the reassuring work of its predecessor. Whereas the T-800 formerly served as a fitting metaphor of the need to revise masculinity, demonstrating his ability to change by actively protecting the family he once threatened to destroy, his main role in *Terminator 3* is to play cupid and bring Katherine and John together. Referring to himself as 'an obsolete model' has various implications, not least of which is his significance as a macho parody, which the film happily plays upon. Describing Katherine as a 'healthy female of breeding age' is a rational evaluation of her suitability as a wife and mother which also sums up the narrative's primary evaluation of her. If his earlier transformation was intended to prove that 'masculine' identity is relatively unfixed and capable of being 'reprogrammed', his behaviour in *Terminator 3* is more regressive than progressive, designed to ensure not only the survival of the Connor family, but also a patently old-fashioned model of the nuclear family – a model that is surely just as anachronistic as the old-fashioned machismo symbolised by the T-800 himself.

Given the ideological problems inherent in the notion of family values, it only remains to ask whether anything positive can be gleaned from such a concept. In attempting to transform familial discourse into a positive metaphor of coalition and resistance, Chris Hables Gray has argued that cyborgs and families each symbolise an assemblage of different parts and therefore a potent metaphor of community. As he asserts: 'The cyborg is not "naturally" a US citizen or a member of the global family – she is constructed just as every citizen is, socially and technically, and can be potentially changed, reconnected and reassembled.'[54] Whether progressive social action can be achieved by such kinship is a point that is illustrated in *Terminator 2*, in which Sarah Connor's alignment with Mexican

guerrilla activists indicates a form of community beyond blood ties. However, for all the warmth and camaraderie of these relations there is an arsenal of weaponry these people have amassed, lying beneath the make-shift home they have built. The young baby coddled at this site cannot detract from the fact that such weapons are intended to eliminate life, and to potentially destroy other people's families, just as the gentleness cyborg fathers are shown to be capable of is simultaneously undermined by the violence each exhibits in defence of their families. Given such inconsistencies, our understanding of family values is clearly in need of continued scrutiny, as are any claims regarding a revised masculinity.

While the family can be conceived as a potential means of coalition, the ideological associations underpinning this metaphor, together with that of family values themselves, seems too burdened with pre-existing ideas to be useful as a political strategy. In fact, not only has familial discourse frequently been applied to uphold social divisions, often used by reactionary organisations to sanction homophobia and curtail women's rights, the traditional concept of the family is also clearly too problematic to be considered progressive, even if it remains a persistent ideal nonetheless, as *Terminator 3* proves. Earlier narratives such as *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3* may have recognised contemporary changes in family structures, and attempted to envisage alternative gender roles operating therein, yet limitations clearly remain, with such roles proving, in some ways, to be not that different after all.

As to the family's ultimate importance in evaluating contemporary identity, in contrast to the Freudo-Lacanian belief that family background is the most crucial element of subjectivity, this too is highly questionable. Andrew Gordon has suggested that the American preoccupation with families stems from a fundamental ambivalence about their significance, arguing that: 'We seem compelled to loudly assert the value of hearth and home, as if we constantly need to persuade ourselves of their worth.'[55] Like Sobchack, Gordon perceives the ubiquity of family tropes in SF cinema as a conservative message, claiming that: 'What such films are really saying is not "there's no place like home" but "there's no place *but* home" – because the bonds of family are omnipresent and inescapable.'[56]

Conservative or not, the idea that there are constants in terms of human relations and social organisation is a compelling fantasy because it provides some grounding during periods of change and this surely accounts for its appeal and persistence. The family is always likely to be important because it is the site where our earliest formative experiences are forged and is a figurative place that we continually return to throughout our lives. Families, like technology, can be both repressive and empowering, helping to define who we are, but not *all* that we are.

Due to developments in reproductive technologies actual cyborg families are coming into existence, with IVF procedures, surrogacy, fostering and adoption each extending the ability to have children beyond blood ties, sexuality or biological age limits. This proves the family's mutability in recent times, while additionally emphasising our continuing need to assess what is meant by this term.

On screen, the cyborg's transition to family entertainment has been an interesting one, although it is tempting to suggest that it is in trying to render the cyborg

family-friendly that its greatest allure was lost. *Bicentennial Man* (Columbus, 1999) and *AI: Artificial Intelligence* (Spielberg, 2001) provide additional examples of innocent machines who become humanised through their experiences within a family, with each film containing an excess of sentiment that suggests comfort and reassurance are still being sought in repeating specific patterns from the past. In fact, *AI*'s sentiment is achieved against the odds, counter-pointed by a bleak scenario in which a mechanical boy created as a surrogate 'child' is designed to love, yet rejected by his adoptive mother because she cannot overlook his difference. For all his surface verisimilitude and seeming sincerity he cannot emulate the biological ties she has to her natural son and is cast out of the family. His desire to become human and thus secure her love remains undiminished however and the film ultimately opts to fulfil this wish for one artificial day, creating a cloned version of his 'mother' who is infinitely more loving than the woman he knew. In doing so it upholds a myth that has no actual substance, preserving an ideal of humanity that was never truly accurate yet which is reiterated nonetheless, and articulating the extent to which, no matter how things change, they also stay the same.

7

Reality Unplugged: Postmodernism, Posthumanism and the Cyborg

Any attempt to separate postmodernism from contemporary SF is a messy business, not least in determining who gets custody of the cyborg, yet this chapter focuses on precisely this task in order to assess their respective influence on the cyborg's formation. The alignment between postmodern theory and prevalent themes in both cyborg cinema and cyberpunk literature is partly explained by the fact that they emerged simultaneously and were motivated by mutual concerns, chief among which is the suggestion that an increasingly technologised environment is impacting upon subjectivity and the way in which we relate to the world. Another key feature shared by these fictional forms, and one that has been deemed emblematic of postmodern culture, is the somewhat bleak vision of the future presented in such narratives and the accompanying conviction that humans must adapt themselves to survive, an idea that has been linked to the notion of the posthuman. The chapter appraises the relative advantages and limitations postmodernism offers in terms of addressing identity and conceiving possibilities for social change. Despite the radical and subversive connotations that have so often been attributed to the discourse, it is interpreted instead as a symptom of profound disillusionment concerning the political sphere at large, one that frequently combined with an odd technophilia as a means of deliverance. In detailing the emphasis placed on technology as both an oppressive and emancipatory agent, the chapter investigates how reality itself became unplugged from theoretical inquiry at the turn of the twenty-first century, with postmodernists suggesting that the very concept of the real was now a lost realm, like the notion of an authentic, stable humanity.

Examples are drawn from both cyborg and cyberpunk narratives in order to evaluate postmodernism's main tenets and its accompanying drawbacks in evaluating contemporary culture, subjectivity, and the current status of political inquiry, ultimately finding postmodern theory to be as problematic as the 'meta-narratives' it was once considered to have superseded. The *Matrix* trilogy is examined in some depth, arguing that in eliding any material concerns such as social structure and economic organisation in its imagined future, and in the greater attention given to spectacle and pseudo-philosophising, rather than address the world we are living in today, these films indicate fundamental problems within postmodernism itself. Although related interests and intersections are identified, the factors that render

cyborg films distinct from both cyberpunk and postmodernism are additionally outlined, maintaining that what sets these films apart is crucial to understanding them. The chapter concludes by asking whether a paradoxical and polysemic metaphor can ever provide the basis for coherent understanding, let alone potentially cohesive action, and whether entertainment forms such as cyborg cinema are the best place to look for such answers.

The fields of SF and postmodernism have become interrelated to the extent that certain examples of the genre, such as cyberpunk literature, have been hailed as the definitive mode of postmodern expression.[1] The reasons for this are clear: while SF has always been motivated by an interest in technology's likely impact on society, cyberpunk's near-future speculations about cyberspace were particularly timely as home computers and Virtual Reality technologies were introduced in the 80s, as was the fact that such stories tended to be set in a ruthless Capitalist society in which technological adaptation was rendered fundamental to survival. Cyborg films released during the decade revealed similar concerns in their depiction of dystopian environments and augmented humans, questioning the possibilities of posthuman existence, as well as likely prospects for the future.

Such themes had a quasi-political resonance with academic concerns regarding identity and ideology, particularly postmodern theory – a new critical discipline that gained attention at precisely the same time as these texts began to circulate. Postmodernism provided an apt new methodology by which to assess contemporary culture and even resembled speculative fiction in its focal interest in technology and change. As a consequence of the theory's impact on criticism the very factors that had previously been used to condemn SF cinema as superficial and derivative became praised as an articulation of postmodernism's defining elements. In their attention to design and special effects, SF films were deemed a perfect illustration of spectacle and surface; in quoting from other films and media they were archetypal examples of intertextuality; and in focusing on technology's impact on human identity they described the fragmented identity that we were all presumably experiencing. SF had come of age and the cyborg was duly seized upon by critics as a potent signifier of the seemingly inescapable 'postmodern condition' – a symbol of humanity on the brink of colossal change.

The cyborg's relevance to postmodern concerns can be seen on a number of levels yet perhaps its most significant characteristic is its paradoxical nature. Because the cyborg – in theory at least – cannot easily be confined to any one nation, race, class, gender, or sexuality, it confounds the meta-narratives that have been said to govern Western epistemology, thereby embodying the postmodern belief that such discourses are no longer applicable. This assumption can be understood in either of two ways. As evidence of the loss of meaning in contemporary society, signifying a pronounced end to the notion of a coherent subjectivity, and greater reliance on a technologically mediated 'reality' in a world bereft of signifying co-ordinates; or, more positively, as a progressive symbol of change, positively enabled by technology's growing impact on society, providing a vital means of transcending outmoded ways of thinking. Both stances starkly conflict with one another yet are fundamental to both the cyborg and postmodernism. Both

nihilistic and hopeful with regard to social transformation, equally condemnatory and celebratory in relation to technological development, postmodern rhetoric has a puzzling quality that frustrates as much as it intrigues, and the cyborg therefore makes a fitting metaphor by which to explain and evaluate its relative advantages and limitations in making sense of contemporary identity.

Jean Baudrillard aptly exemplifies the pessimistic branch of postmodern logic, and while he favours the term 'simulacra' over 'cyborg', the implications are the same: a means of describing subjectivity in an electronically mediated landscape. As he puts it, 'we are simulators, we are simulacra . . . we are concave mirrors radiated by the social'.[2] Providing what is essentially a high-tech equivalent of Plato's cave hypothesis, Baudrillard muses on the nature of reality and concludes that we are now in an age of 'hyperreality' in which only simulations exist. He describes this situation with dour lyricism, arguing that 'it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real.'[3] Baudrillard thus appears to combine deterministic explanations of media power with SF fears about human identity being threatened by external forces, yet his work is notably devoid of any response other than resignation and apathy, asserting that 'only the fiction of a political universe remains'.[4]

While he has increasingly utilised science fictional motifs such as holograms, clones, and simulacra, it is the dystopia that Baudrillard's writing most clearly evokes, influencing other critics to pronounce the end of civilisation as we know it in similarly hyperbolic (and patently depoliticised) fashion. As Christopher Sharrett has pointed out, 'the apocalypse of postmodernity is almost always couched in that very popular misuse of apocalypse not as revelation but doomsday, disaster, the end'.[5] Sharrett's linking of this discourse with fin-de-siecle rhetoric is particularly apposite considering that postmodernism's doom-laden prophecies seemed to gain popularity just as the twentieth century was reaching its end. As he additionally notes, postmodern criticism is fundamentally reactionary because, for all its talk of finality, it stems from a pronounced lack of faith in anything other than the perpetuation (and inevitability) of Capitalism.[6]

There are more optimistic critics however, who despite being similarly unable to suggest any alternative political framework, find some comfort in embracing posthumanity as a new beginning, with representatives including Donna Haraway, Scott Bukatman and N. Katherine Hayles. New technologies are hailed as a positive means of reinterpreting human identity in our supposedly postmodern age and new descriptions are accordingly invented for the technologically modified subjectivities each critic envisages; termed as 'cyborg' by Haraway, 'terminal identity' by Bukatman, and 'posthuman' by Hayles. All three contend the necessity of conceptually freeing ourselves from physical boundaries, with posthumanism described by Hayles as 'a cybernetic idea that mind and computer can be correlated – leaving the body peripheral to human subjectivity'.[7]

Although this last comment is intended to suggest an ideological rather than explicitly physical transition, it coincides with other desires making themselves felt in the growing techno-culture of the 80s and early 90s, which similarly

seemed to imply that the solution to mortal problems lay in surpassing corporeal existence. Such a contention invokes a cybernetic version of Rapture, investing hope in technology's ability to transform life for the better. Mark Dery has termed this belief as 'techno-transcendentalism'[8] – a desire to surpass mortality through technological intervention – which may be applied to such diverse activities as 'surfing' the Internet or inhabiting the alternative space of Virtual Reality, to more extreme measures such as 'uploading' human consciousness into a computer system; creating an infinite number of clones to safeguard against disease; augmenting the human body to extend longevity – or perhaps even to equip it to survive in space. Most of these ideas began as SF themes, many are becoming distinct possibilities, and each have attracted believers in the same way as any religion offering a chance of redemption. All are what I would term as 'machine dreams' – evidence of the extent to which we have invested in technology as a means of escape and empowerment.

Yet as contemporary as this phenomenon may seem, posthumanism is a dream that is as old as humanity, ironically testifying to the idea that our one enduring definition as a species may be an awareness of our mortality and a desire to transcend this cold fact. It is not simply that this desire has become more prominent in recent years, but that it has acquired greater legitimacy. What was once seen as 'tampering with nature' and accordingly punished in both literature and cinema has given way to a cynical pragmatism in some quarters as a fascination with technological embodiment has taken hold. Such concerns gained particular relevance as the twentieth century drew to a close, particularly as bio-technologies have made the idea of 'participant evolution' – the opportunity to shape physical characteristics through medical intervention – increasingly possible, providing yet another means by which to leave the faulty mortal body behind. As a consequence of such developments, and as 'nature' has become ideologically suspect, along with any universal notion of humanity, the cyborg has been used to fill the void in attempting to make sense of who we are and what we might become.

The economic circumstances that have since been described as 'postmodern' and 'late Capitalist' have also added greater relevance to the concept of cyborg subjectivity. With Capitalism having advanced, and a pronounced disillusionment with alternative political systems evidenced, theorists argued that these conditions had a profound effect on both political understanding and the nature of identity, arguing that we had entered a new era in which discourses of the past, including the idea of an integral and unified subjectivity, were no longer valid. Particular interest was shown in new technologies and their ambivalent potential in shaping our lives, as well as new media forms that were said to reflect the prevailing climate.

Although the term 'postmodern' had been used in critical discourse since the late 1960s, its specific connection to social issues was initiated by Lyotard who defined it in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) as a contemporary cultural phenomenon in which high art was not considered more valuable than popular culture; it was no longer possible to separate the real from the copy, or the natural from the artificial; and widespread cynicism meant a necessary abandonment of the notion of

progress as possible, probable, or able to benefit humanity as a whole.[9] Fredric Jameson extended these ideas in an article published in *New Left Review* entitled 'Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' (1984, subsequently expanded into a book of the same title in 1991). Taking Ernest Mandel's three-stage view of Capitalist production and dubbing the last of these 'postmodern', Jameson explicitly politicised Lyotard's original conception by asserting that post-modernism is best understood as a response to economic factors, and specifically 'the nature of multinational capitalism today'.[10] The features of postmodernism were cited as a new depthlessness, prolonged by what Jameson termed as a culture of simulacrum; a weakening of historicity; and a more intimate relationship to new technologies, which he claimed to be the result of 'a whole new economic world system'.[11] New developments in SF were deemed to be emblematic of this socio-economic period, with Jameson asserting that cyberpunk is 'as much an expression of transnational corporate realities as it is of global paranoia itself'.[12]

The release of *Blade Runner* seemed to anticipate Jameson's ideas about postmodern culture, with its nostalgia for the past, its conflation of periods, and its concern with identifying and differentiating the human from its copy. William Gibson reportedly left the cinema halfway through its screening because the film so closely paralleled his ideas for *Neuromancer* – a work in progress at the time that was eventually published in the same year as Jameson's *Postmodernism*.[13] An interesting trajectory thus appears during the mid-80s, with the ideas of Jameson, Baudrillard and Gibson converging with themes incorporated in the cyborg film, and it is tempting to argue that this is evidence of some collective unconscious or zeitgeist at work, with such disparate sources reflecting concerns which the prevailing political climate had brought to the fore.[14] The 80s saw a surge in Capitalist investment, the growth of multinational conglomerate empires, and a heightened degree of self-interest in an increasingly ruthless world. The ethos of the Reagan/Thatcher years thus lent a specific realism to the dystopias imagined by cyberpunk novelists, film-makers, and cultural theorists alike, in which the worst tendencies of prevailing economic conditions were not deemed likely to stop, but could only be extrapolated into something far worse – a nightmare world where sentimental questions about human identity were no longer relevant in the battle to simply survive.

Cyberpunk literature not only helped to attract academic interest in the SF genre, but its ambivalent attitude towards technology and reinforcal of Capitalism's seeming inevitability became prominent themes in postmodern theory also. In *Neuromancer*, console cowboys and augmented assassins populate a near-future nightmare of polarised classes, intense deprivation and corporate avarice. Technologically modified humans are portrayed as a logical response to a dehumanising existence, with neurological implants equipping 'cyberpunks' to survive in an environment that is both exciting and dangerous. While a nostalgic impulse is demonstrated by the novel's protagonist, Case, this is ultimately forsaken for the lure of cyberspace – which even holds the promise of potential immortality.

It is because such narratives are not simply cautionary tales that they have generated controversy, yet while some accused them of antihumanism, others

praised them for articulating the idea that science and technology cannot be rejected – because they have become an integral part of ourselves. Critics such as Haraway and Baudrillard concurred with this estimation and a concept that had earned the ostracism of philosopher, Julien de La Mettrie, centuries earlier consequently became hailed as startlingly original when repeated by theorists in the mid-80s, claiming that we are all cyborgs in one way or another, and too far from what is conceived as 'natural' to uphold an essentialist view of humanity.

Rather then perceive this as a lamentable condition, both theorists and writers have made positive claims for posthumanity as a necessary evolutionary process. Indeed, cyberpunk author and spokesperson, Bruce Sterling, contends that 'the technological destruction of the human condition leads not to futureshocked zombies but to hopeful monsters'.[15] Yet while Sterling's fiction envisages an inevitable relinquishing of human physiology and identity in order to survive, with his Shaper/Mechanist series seeming to infer, as Bukatman has put it, that 'if there ever was an "essential" human nature, then surely there is no longer',[16] cyborg cinema has increasingly inferred the opposite. In fact, while no less hopeful in spirit, the cyborg's representation on the big screen has tended to hold firmly onto the very tenets that so many claimed needed to be relinquished, preserving an integral sense of humanity, even among technological creations.

This is a crucial distinction, particularly given the tendency to view cyborg films as a cinematic extension of cyberpunk literature, for in many ways cyborg cinema strongly repudiates such an assertion, and does so chiefly by retaining a core investment in human values. Despite the alienating conditions depicted in the cycle, and the circumstances of their creation, cyborgs tend to show that they are ideally equipped to survive without any undue impediment to their faculties as a sentient and caring person. Indeed, even ostensible machines are effectively humanised through demonstrating these emotions. Hence, far from being jettisoned as outmoded or obsolete, the notion of an essential human nature is shown to be integral to these narratives, accompanied by specific norms and ideals. The use of romantic sub-plots and 'family values' perpetuate seemingly intrinsic human characteristics, consequently subverting the fear that humanity might become only a ghost in the machine, and asserting instead that, whatever physical change may occur, an essential human spirit remains. The cinematic cyborg therefore signals a victory for humanism that stands in contrast to both cyberpunk and postmodernism's overwhelming sense of nihilism, offering an important sense of hope where little had previously existed.

What cyborg films share with cyberpunk however, is the suggestion that corporate Capitalism has changed the world entirely and it is in representing such changes in its futuristic landscapes, and incorporating the very technologies that are questioned in its narratives, that has led cyborg cinema to be conflated with postmodern ideas. Hence, the most commonly cited 'postmodern' film still tends to be *Blade Runner*, with *Terminator 2* frequently mentioned also as a veritable case study in postmodern thematics. The cyborg film's articulation of postmodern concepts includes several key elements. A narrative concern with distinguishing the 'real' from its copy and devices such as grid screens, monitors and implants all

construct a world of simulation similar to that described by Baudrillard, suggesting that contemporary subjectivity is increasingly invaded by external influences. An over-riding sense of nostalgia is also apparent, with cyborgs frequently possessing repressed memories of a past that is often tenuously conceived – thereby seeming to reflect what Jameson has termed as the 'waning of our historicity, of our lived possibility of experiencing history in some way'.[17] The cyborg film's dependence on technology – both textually, in the cyborg itself, and extra-textually, in the special effects used to bring it to the screen – highlights another postmodern concern, displaying a level of 'self-reflexivity' that has accounted for much of the interest postmodern critics have exhibited towards the cycle, with the accompanying idea that such films not only foreground their own construction, but that of humanity also, seeming to celebrate an increasingly technologised existence in doing so. Finally, the very fact of the cyborg film's use within academic debate seems to epitomise the conflation of 'high' art and popular culture argued by postmodernists to be indicative of a definitively new moment, effectively breaching the boundary that would once have held these realms apart.

Nonetheless, despite these elements, and the tendency to appropriate cyborg films as 'postmodern', they differ most in shoring up a specific understanding of human identity as able to withstand an increasingly hostile social environment. Technology and commerce may combine to threaten humanity in ever more profound ways, thereby confirming the cynicism evident within postmodern theory, yet the cyborg film makes a narrative investment in human values that is infinitely more reassuring.

By contrast, theorists such as Baudrillard have proved to be singularly unsentimental about humanity, convinced that the end is already upon us and seeming to imply that this fate might even be deserved. The negative fatalism of such thinking is troubling precisely because it cannot conceive of positive social change but seemingly prefers to transcend the difficulties of contemporary existence via superficial theory and speculation. Hence, Baudrillard asserts that 'it is the real that has become our true utopia – but a utopia that is no longer in the realm of the possible, that can only be dreamt of as one would dream of a lost object'.[18] Suggesting that SF is no longer able to imagine anything substantially different to the present, Baudrillard claims that it consequently parallels contemporary academic discourse, arguing that 'the same wavering and indeterminate fate puts an end to SF – but also to theory, as specific genres'.[19]

Jameson similarly conflates SF with cultural criticism, yet although he is more optimistic than Baudrillard in arguing for a new kind of 'political art' – one that envisages an alternative world to the one we have at present – SF is not deemed up to the task. In fact, Jameson accuses dystopian narratives of working to reinforce, rather than oppose, present social conditions, arguing that SF's 'deepest vocation is to bring home in local and determinate ways, and with a fullness of concrete detail, our constitutional inability to imagine Utopia itself'.[20] Others have disagreed however, with Larry McCaffery claiming that cyberpunk literature achieves precisely the aims Jameson is searching for, evaluating the movement as 'art responding to the technological milieu that is producing postmodern culture

at large' and thus helping us see the world as it really is.[21] This claim seemingly fulfils Jameson's concept of 'cognitive mapping' – the closest he has come to suggesting a positive political strategy, vaguely described as 'the phenomenon by which people make sense of their urban surroundings'.[22] However, Jameson's greatest detraction is the celebration of technology that occurs in such fiction, arguing that 'current fantasies about the salvational nature of high technology, from chips to robots – fantasies entertained not only by both left and right governments in distress but also by many intellectuals – are also essentially of a piece with more vulgar apologias for postmodernism'.[23]

It is uncertain whether Jameson is directly conflating the cyborg film with cyberpunk in this reference to what he terms as 'the salvational nature of high technology', yet the question is an important one in evaluating their corresponding stance towards technology. Fundamentally, while they may similarly depict urban landscapes and intensely stratified societies, cyberpunk's main focus is on cyberspace – the virtual realm in which protagonists project their disembodied consciousness within a software environment of electronic information. The films that have attempted to portray this space are few and far between, including *TRON* (Lisberger, 1982), *The Lawnmower Man* (Leonard, 1992), and *The Matrix* trilogy (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999, 2003). Although technology is portrayed as potentially destructive, it also offers protagonists a new world in which the mind is elevated above physicality. Cyborgs, by contrast, exist in the corporeal realm that cyberspace offers an escape from, and thus arguably offer a more tangible level of commitment to the material world, as do the relations of power portrayed in such films. Melding with technologies in a much more intimate way than the cyberpunk, cyborgs cannot disconnect from this interface because it is an essential part of themselves, one which they must learn to live with. Nevertheless, because they are often equipped with advanced strength, and positioned as heroic figures, they also tend to symbolise technology's joint potential as both a threatening and salvational force. Both cyberpunk and cyborg narratives therefore underline the idea that it is only via technological embodiment that we can ever be delivered from present problems.

In doing so they may both be seen to illustrate a key paradox of postmodernism, portraying an advancing 'techno-culture' as all-pervasive yet also potentially empowering, questioning how (if at all) we are able to distinguish between humans and simulacra – while suggesting that any such distinctions are untenable, with a tendency to applaud individual transformation while the bleak social landscapes that form a repeated motif in such texts, and which is perhaps their most archetypal postmodern feature, largely remains unchanged.

In fact, a fundamental flaw within postmodern discourse is the inability to conceive of any solutions for what is described as an apparently insoluble political system, having decisively foreclosed against the possibility of alternatives. Timothy Bewes has described the cynicism inherent within the discourse as melancholic, introspective and apolitical; arguing that its essential paradox: 'much observed, and much lamented, is the obvious and ineradicable fact that postmodernity is itself a meta-narrative – a further peculiarity of which is that it appears to offer

not an ideological basis for political activity, but rather the opposite, that is an ideological basis for refraining from political activity'.[24]

In failing to perceive any options to the present other than a deterioration of conditions, postmodernism can be seen to sow the seeds of its own discontent and thus reproduce the very conditions it ostensibly sets out to critique. Despite its insights in making sense of the electronically mediated, superficial nature of contemporary Western culture, postmodern theory fails to offer us anything really new. Indeed, I would argue that its insights were largely borrowed from SF in the first place, from writers such as Philip K. Dick who had observed society in transition and extrapolated its negative tendencies decades earlier, perceptively commenting on the shifting nature of reality, the impact of commerce, and the potential consequences of increasingly sophisticated media to distort consciousness. Theorists such as Baudrillard merely took such ideas and academicised them, ironically celebrating the perceived development of a world that Dick had set out to warn about. As Bukatman has commented, 'Baudrillard's text aspires to the condition of science fiction, and becomes performative of the process he once merely described.'[25] As a consequence he has helped to advance a deterministic view of technology's impact while revelling in the 'seductive' processes of dehumanisation.

The debate that took place within the pages of the academic journal *Science Fiction Studies* in 1991 illustrates the dangers of such dehumanising tendencies. A special edition of the journal was devoted to exploring the intersection between postmodernism and SF, largely in order to translate two of Baudrillard's essays into English.[26] In a review of Ballard's *Crash*, Baudrillard displayed customary enthusiasm for the novel's fusion of flesh and metal, and a number of critics were invited to comment. Vivian Sobchack responded by stating that she had recently undergone an operation on her leg, leaving a sizeable scar, and that despite her efforts to reclaim this technologically invaded part of herself, she had failed to envisage the erotic possibilities of which he had so enthused. As she pointedly remarked, 'there's nothing like a little pain to bring us (back) to our senses, nothing like a real (not imagined) mark or wound or artificial orifice to counter Baudrillard's postmodern romanticism'.[27] Her comments form a pertinent reminder of the difference between theoretical speculation and actual experience, a point that was reiterated by N. Katherine Hayles' further admonishment that 'the borders separating simulations from reality are important because they remind us of the limits that make dreams of technological transcendence dangerous fantasies'.[28]

In some ways this last point compounds everything we need to be cautious about concerning postmodern theory because as innovative and original and appropriate as it has been in making sense of contemporary reality, it can all too often detract from the real and engulf utopian possibility (like one of Baudrillard's black holes) leaving little in its wake but a perverse delight in nihilism. Instead of attempting to reclaim human values as they are perceived to be eroded by Capitalism, postmodernists seem anxious to rid themselves of the human altogether and thus do little to address the all too real (and explicitly human) problems experienced in the here and now.

Equally problematic is the tendency of those who were initially critical of this discourse to then succumb to its logic, testifying to the invariable inclination among theorists to champion an academic trend if they can boost their profile in doing so. For example, while Hayles warned that dreams of technological transcendence were 'dangerous fantasies' back in 1991, she repeats these very tendencies in her book, *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), which celebrates the 'posthuman' as a privileging of information and consciousness over physicality.[29] She only notes as an afterthought that 'there is a limit to how seamlessly humans can be articulated with intelligent machines, which remain distinctively different from humans in their embodiments'[30] – thus rendering the entire premise of her book redundant, while failing to counter the extent to which it reiterates, rather than opposes, Baudrillardian technophilia.

In his own response to that important postmodern edition of *Science Fiction Studies*, Brooks Landon asks: 'should I celebrate the fact that someone as critically hot as Baudrillard cares about SF in general . . . or should I chafe at the implicit assumption that SF still needs critical valorising?'[31] The dilemma is clear, because although the genre's recognition is undoubtedly deserved, there is an extent to which theoretical approval simply attempts to claim particular ideas. Yet despite criticising the academic appropriation of a neglected field suddenly made hip, Landon then published his own evaluation of contemporary SF cinema, entitled *The Aesthetics of Ambivalence* (1992), which appeared to cash in on this very trend.

The central theme of the book is an examination of the genre's postmodern features. Taking Baudrillard's obsession with simulation to its extreme, and revealing his own background as a journalist who has made his living reporting on the technical aspects of SF film-making, Landon envisages the prospects of SF cinema as being little more than a show-case for spectacle in which 'computer graphics and animation – the digital narrative of the image – displace and possibly replace conventional narratives'.[32] Rather than denounce this development, Landon asserts that 'production technology – always a central fascination of SF film – has liberated SF film from the SF story'.[33] In applauding what he perceives as the end of traditional narrative under the advance of electronic culture, Landon reiterates the tension inherent within postmodernism: asserting that new technologies are eroding conventional means of understanding the world, while simultaneously claiming that they provide an innovative way forward. In fact, the postmodern resonances are all too clear in Landon's additional assertion that the 'increasing foregrounding of computer technology in SF film is part of a societal change in which distinctions between science fiction and cultural reality are growing ever more difficult to maintain'.[34]

The *Matrix* trilogy (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999, 2003) provides a useful demonstration of the extent to which Landon's assertions have proved to be correct, not only in emphasising spectacle over content, and playing on this lack of clear distinctions between fiction and reality, but in clearly emulating the electronic games that he predicts will become the future medium of the SF genre. Indeed, because these films deliberately allude to numerous postmodern motifs, including

direct reference to many of Baudrillard's ideas, they are deemed worthy of relatively detailed analysis.

The fact that a revamped version of cyberpunk should greet our screens a decade after the movement had been disbanded by its literary progenitors is interesting in itself, yet a number of films had started to appear in the 1990s in which the hacker-cyberpunk took centre stage. Springer contends that the cyborg effectively morphed into this new figure as a matter of survival – becoming streamlined to meet new audience expectations. As she puts it, with the muscular cyborg becoming an object of parody, 'cybernetically enhanced existence shifted in films from pumped-up physiques to expanded minds'.[35] Having viewed the macho cyborg of the 1980s as a sign of fearful masculinity threatened by women and a changing world, and arguing that it was created 'to resist the postmodern breakdown of gender boundaries and rigid rules pertaining to sexuality',[36] Springer regards the new 'cyberthriller' in which such figures appeared as reiterating much the same fears, stating that 'not unlike the hard-bodied cyborg films of the 1980s, the 1990s cyberthrillers work to ward off the instability made possible by technological existence'.[37]

Springer's reading of one such film, *Johnny Mnemonic* (Longo, 1995), as a post-modern text proves a telling inability to relinquish established ideas, arguing that Johnny's work as a data courier in a megacorporate future 'exemplifies postmodern fragmentation, disorientation and powerlessness', and further claiming that 'Johnny literalizes a postmodern subject bombarded with information, disconnected from the past in an eternal present, and spatially disconnected.'[38] In cinematic terms however, the film falls down largely due to its nonsensical plot, appalling acting, poor production values, and its disappointing portrayal of cyberspace as little more than a virtual grid-screen. In fact, despite having been written by William Gibson (based on one of his short stories) it comes across as an unintentional parody of cyberpunk, with a depiction of the protagonist interfacing with data-gloves and a neural link seeming as hackneyed and absurd as it's narrative.

As a high-tech data courier, Johnny (Keanu Reeves) has jettisoned a part of his humanity in order to become a better tool for Capitalism, removing his long-term memory in order to transfer corporate information from one client to another. As a result of this process and his lack of a past, he is simply a soft machine who cares about little else other than his own survival. But life on the streets forces Johnny to acquire a sense of political conviction, alongside an ability to love. The downloaded data stored inside his head realises the hacker fantasy of transforming the world through information, containing a cure to the virus – Nerve Attenuation Syndrome – that has infected most of the world, ironically enough, via the Internet. From a disaffected loner interested only in himself (much like *Neuromancer*'s Case and other cyberpunk protagonists), and thanks in part to a memory chip that restores childhood memories, Johnny gets in touch with who he really is, secures a love interest, and ultimately saves the planet.

Cut to *The Matrix*, released four years later, and we have a *Johnny Mnemonic* upgrade with better special effects. Thomas Anderson (also played by Reeves) is a computer programmer who hacks on the side, is enlisted by a group of rebels,

and seemingly becomes politicised. Yet *The Matrix* not only plays with cyberpunk themes, it also deliberately invokes postmodern conceits and ultimately echoes the same sense of nihilism. Borrowing from a variety of sources, including references to Alice in Wonderland, Jean Baudrillard, and *The Terminator*, the film depicts an underground rebel group who fight against an oppressive system by plugging themselves into a virtual game zone. Just as *eXistenZ* (Cronenberg, 1999) centres on the idea that reality and illusion may become indistinguishable if technologies themselves are suitably advanced, so *The Matrix* pushes this idea even further by suggesting that conventional reality itself is a myth.

Anderson's life changes one day when he is contacted via his computer console. After following a series of clues and outrunning strangers intent on killing him, he is enlisted into a secret network of humans who tell him that his life up until this point is a fabrication created by machines. Referring to him by his hacker moniker, 'Neo', they argue that his true identity is that of a prophesied 'saviour' known as The One. Although he is initially sceptical, it is this ascribed role that is ultimately adopted, his past life, in clear contrast to Johnny, having been rendered irrelevant. In the future portrayed in the film, a vast AI keeps humanity in a semi-conscious state. Humans are rigged from birth to a mass of cables designed for machines to suck our energy. The most absurd scene of the film occurs when rebel leader Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) informs 'Neo' what humans have amounted to by holding up a Duracell battery. We are expected to believe that an entity so powerful that it can create intricate simulacra and deceive the entire planet can invent no better energy source than the rather negligible amount of electricity located in the human body. If the premise is ridiculous, so is the suggested means of opposition.

The solution formulated by Morpheus and his crew is not to locate the source of this power base and blow it up, presumably either because it is too vast or because of the inert human lives that would be at risk. Nor is it to transmit a signal that might wake these slumbering humans from their reverie. The solution is much more fun than that. It is to acquire a host of martial arts skills by having them cerebrally down-loaded, hook back up into a machine, re-enter the virtual world of 'the matrix' with these in tow, and play whatever games are simulated therein with the human-like entities created by the AI.

What makes such a patently nonsensical plot watchable, if not believable, is the way in which these sequences are shot. Pushing the envelope in terms of what had previously been achieved in Western cinema, the actors are suspended from wires so that the smallest details are shown in the action taking place. Computer animation is additionally employed in order to showcase this new level of precision, revealing such details as a bullet's passage across the screen (lending the effect the term 'bullet-time') and the result is a highly stylised means of film-making.

As to the narrative, it subverts Gibson's notion of cyberspace as a 'consensual hallucination'[39] by portraying everyday reality as an illusion designed to keep people docile, or as Morpheus describes the matrix, 'it is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth'. However, *The Matrix* obviates

the political dimension of this concept by opting for a patently fantastical conceit: blaming an AI, rather than any system or ideology, for having deceived humans.

This evident technophobia is reminiscent of *The Terminator*, which similarly evades human culpability in its depicted future. *The Terminator* sets out with the premise that machines become too powerful once they are 'hooked into everything' and start to perceive all humans as a threat. It is an old concept in SF, reworking such films as *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (Sargent, 1969) which similarly presents a scenario in which supercomputers created for national defence unite with one another to take over the world. Vestiges of cold war hostility and anti-militarism are equally apparent in *The Terminator*'s targeting of Skynet Defence Systems as the cause of mankind's downfall, but the main narrative vehicle driving the film is a pronounced fear that machines will become sentient and attempt to supersede humanity. The few humans that survive the nuclear detonation created by Skynet emerge as a threatened virtually redundant species who can do little else but hide from their machine masters and pray for the intervention of a unique individual to save them.

The Matrix presents a virtual replica of this scenario, with an AI that is similarly able to create authentic-seeming simulacra. However, machines do not aim to simply annihilate humans, but continually exploit them instead, placing them from birth in the equivalent of a battery farm where their energy is sucked through tubes to feed their captors while their brains are fed a Virtual Reality that resembles the world we are living in today. Exemplifying postmodern nihilism at its most extreme, the *Matrix* contends that reality as we know it is literally unbelievable and that economic forces are therefore as immaterial as any other social problem facing humanity. In contrast to *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop*, which implicitly accuse commercial acquisition and corporate ruthlessness for having degraded human existence, *The Terminator* and *Matrix* franchises target machines themselves as a suitably fantastic enemy. Yet while *The Terminator* criticises Skynet, and thus, by inference, Reagan's Star Wars program, *The Matrix* evinces a marked apoliticism that fails to address actual social forces at all. Appropriately enough for a form so heavily invested with postmodern traits, *The Matrix* conceives political ideas to be virtual, its protagonists relying on computers in order to battle a power that cannot seemingly be overcome, with all matters concerning industry and economics as illusory as the food people eat and the clothes they wear. The 'real' world, and its all-too-real problems, are rendered not only irrelevant but unreal.

Typically perhaps, reviews have tended to concentrate on the innovative special effects employed in the film to the exclusion of its limited ideas. That style should take greater precedence over content is notable in itself, seeming to prove Landon's assertion that SF cinema's show-casing of technology is fast becoming its raison d'etre. Academic discussion has also tended to emphasise its obvious postmodern qualities. For example, Paul Watson argues that *The Matrix* can be read as 'paradigmatic of generic configurations in "post classical" Hollywood; first as an example of the high-concept blockbuster, and second as one of the most interesting instances of the fusion between Hollywood and Hong Kong cinema'.[40] The collection

of essays with the suitably postmodern title: *The End of Cinema as We Know It: American Film in the Nineties*, references *The Matrix* in three separate contributions. In one article, 'The Zen of Masculinity: Rituals of Heroism in *The Matrix*', Pat Mellancamp examines its intertextual elements and, far from deriding its obvious escapism, argues instead that *The Matrix* is reminiscent of 60s counter-cultural attitudes, maintaining that:

> the over-riding message of the film is that if our belief in ourselves remains steadfast, there is nothing we cannot accomplish or become. Our thoughts, which we will learn to focus and discipline, create and determine our world – a distinctly Eastern philosophical premise. Each obstacle we surmount will make us stronger and will give us the awareness we need to go forward.[41]

This reading is perplexing indeed, particularly because our thoughts alone do not determine the material, economically driven world we live in, yet it highlights the main conceit that the film plays upon, which is that material existence is, to forgive the pun, largely immaterial. Mellancamp adds that in refiguring narrative and subjectivity, *The Matrix* acts as a 'cultural signpost of change',[42] yet fails to say how or why this is necessarily positive.

Another contributor, R.L. Rutsky, examines actor Keanu Reeves' star persona as a figure whose principal interest lies in his physical appeal and seeming lack of identity. In an assessment that could equally be used to describe *The Matrix* itself, as much as its main star, Rutsky states that Reeves 'becomes little more than a face, a body – without depth, without even an interior'.[43] Rather than deride this superficial aspect, Rutsky maintains that 'his serene blankness' is a quality worth praising, arguing that, together with the actor's indeterminate sexual appeal, we should embrace the similarly 'amorphous fluidity' of the present world.[44]

The film is thus praised for factors that would have been condemned a few years ago, its intertextual referencing, derivative inferences, and emphasis on spectacle over character or plot development proving the extent to which films and the critical responses to them have changed with the impact of postmodernism. Not everyone has been so enthused however, and the last article in the *End of Cinema* collection, Wheeler Winston-Dixon's 'Twenty Five Reasons Why It's All Over', cites *The Matrix* in two categories on a list that laments contemporary filmmaking; both for proving that 'contemporary films are relentlessly teen-driven' (aimed at '12–24 year olds'), with the accompanying point that its artistic and thematic concerns destabilise our belief in the visual image while 'simultaneously banishing the real to a phantom-zone of non-existence'.[45]

This is perhaps the most troubling aspect of the film (and the entire trilogy for that matter), for although all fiction films are at basis imaginary vehicles designed to entertain audiences, they also have some point of identification in which we suspend disbelief and commit ourselves to the events that take place on screen. *The Matrix* undermines this relationship with cinema by arguing that it is the world outside the screen that is, in fact, illusory. This is an idea that has yielded much speculation in SF cinema. The events that occur in *Total Recall*, for example,

are so similar to the memory implant given to the protagonist at the beginning of the film that, as Telotte observes, the film visits its own 'schizoid embolism' upon the audience,[46] upsetting our ability to distinguish between reality and artifice.

These are very postmodern concepts to play with, suggesting that media culture impinges on our lives to such a degree that it has rendered the individual uncertain about who they are and what is really happening. As Morpheus states in Baudrillardian fashion: 'the real is simply electrical signals guided by the brain'. Yet the film goes beyond stating that perceptions of reality are all in the mind, arguing that there is no real world and its attendant problems to worry about, and that humanity's sole enemy is not poverty or greed or religious factionalism or fanaticism, but a make-believe technological entity. It thus takes the political notions of ideology and false consciousness and divests them of any substance. As Istvan Csicsery-Ronay has noted in relation to postmodernism and cyberpunk, 'the distance required for reflection is squeezed out as the world implodes; when hallucinations and reality collapse into each other, there is no place from which to reflect'.[47] The same is true of *The Matrix*, which constructs an elaborate techno-fantasy at the expense of intellectual understanding. Despite having set a new benchmark in technical innovation,[48] and for all the pseudo-philosophical jargon bandied about in the film, it is shallow in the extreme and its portrayal of a human-technological interface is worrying indeed because it buys into the very culture that is purportedly critiqued. Its rhetoric is very much that espoused by cyberpunk literature in arguing that we must take control of new technologies if we are to survive, yet shots of dormant humans wired to machines, far from engaging with political ideas, suggest an evasion of them instead; promoting escapism within virtual worlds while the 'meat' is left behind. What makes the plugged-in rebels any different to the human batteries that the rest of the human race consists of? Their computer-assisted means of transcending physical limitations may provide a new take on the fantasy of posthumanity, with abilities that clearly emulate computer game heroes and thus uphold the utopian claims so often made for cyberspace, yet as Pam Rosenthal asserts in response to such claims, 'what a strange and tangled dream, this power that is only gained through matching your synapses to the computer's logic, through beating the system by being the system'.[49]

The Matrix sustains this paradox, and might even be interpreted as a satire not only of postmodernism's evasion of political issues, but of cyberpunk's similarly lethargic worldview, with the rebels' jacked-in minds and comatose bodies fully indicating the consequences of disengagement. However, as its sequels indicate, the *Matrix* universe takes itself much too seriously for this reading. *Matrix: Reloaded* proves to be as disappointing as its predecessor in terms of narrative coherence and political understanding, particularly in its vision of Zion – the 'utopia' where rebels have made a new life for themselves. How this society is organised, where they obtain food or the energy required to drive the machines needed for air, water, lighting and heating is unstated. A councillor remarks on the irony that machines are keeping Zion's humans alive while other machines are advancing to kill them, yet this is the sole consideration given to a fundamental question of the

entire trilogy, which is how we can maintain control of an increasingly technologised environment.

Cyborg themes are manifest not only in the interface human protagonists have with computers but in the host of AI characters that appear in the film, with The Oracle (Gloria Foster) and Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving) both transcending their status as complex programs via the warmth and humour each delivers. Indeed, despite trite comments on the nature of freedom, the inference made is that humans are more manipulated than computer programs. At the end of *Reloaded*, a figure termed as The Architect (Helmut Bakaitis), who is said to be responsible for designing the matrix, states that Zion has been created and destroyed six times and exists in order to de-bug anomalies such as Neo – intending to wipe out resistance from human programming once and for all. The film's seeming utopia, and the very notion of establishing an alternate reality, is thus part of the very system being fought against – a means of absorbing potentially disruptive elements within the system.

Yet as insidious as this idea is, it provides yet another example of unfulfilled potential in the trilogy, with *Reloaded* failing to resolve the problems of the first film, and bearing even closer resemblance to a computer game, including ever more elaborate fight scenes deployed with unnerving tedium. If *The Matrix* was spectacularly hollow, then its sequel is still more so, which is particularly interesting given the effort to inflect greater human interest among it's characters. For all the gyrating corporeality of the ravers in Zion, the love affairs between Neo and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss), Nyobe (Jada Pinkett-Smith) and Morpheus, Link (Harold Perrineau) and his lover, there is an ironic absence of humanity in the film. For the most part, characters are impassive and inarticulate, particularly when operating within the virtual domain of the matrix, where they seemingly exist simply to look good, and the very people the film wishes to make us care about resemble little more than mindless ciphers who hardly seem worth saving.

'Hope: it is the quintessential human emotion' states The Architect, yet Morpheus's belief in prophecy and salvation seems to be a reactionary attempt to insert pseudo-Christian dogma into the setting. Indeed, the entire trilogy follows the hero's journey from computer hacker to superhuman saviour, and the fact that Neo pursues his 'mission' to save humanity in the face of near certain defeat only exacerbates this analogy. The concluding part of the trilogy, *Matrix: Revolutions*, thus serves as judgement day as Zion is targeted for destruction by the Architect. Agent Smith sums up the cyberpunk derision for flesh by stating of his synthetic body: 'Disgusting! Look at how pathetically fragile it is. Nothing this weak is meant to survive!' In seeming acknowledgement of this apparent flaw, Zion's rebels don robot exo-skeletons to battle the mechanical sentinels sent to destroy them. However, they are clearly outnumbered and the film thus provides a showdown in which actual human lives are lost for seemingly no purpose. The genuine finale takes place in the perpetually rain-sodden matrix – an environment that has been damaged by the renegade Agent Smith, and which the Architect and his cohort are anxious to recover. Indeed, it is the machines' eagerness to regain control of

this territory that causes them to strike a deal with Neo, agreeing to save Zion's humans if he will eliminate Smith. In the most absurd of conclusions, Neo secures the perpetuation of the very apparatus that has been used to deceive people and we are left only with the Architect's word that he will free the remaining humans in the machine city . . . because his word is seemingly more honourable than any humans.

Such a denouement is disappointing on many levels, not only because it fails to address how the machines will survive without their supply of humans as an energy source, but because nothing seems to have convincingly altered. In many ways it is the postmodern aspects of the trilogy that account for its failure. The spectacular use of innovative effects fails to compensate for an incoherent plot and insubstantial characterisation. Intertextual elements are all too obvious – with the theme of AI constructs attempting to take over the world, and even a colony called Zion both preceded in *Neuromancer* – yet what is negated entirely is any reference to the corporate culture that is implicitly critiqued within cyberpunk fiction. Baudrillard is invoked in the first film via a copy of his book, *Simulacra and Simulation*, used as a prop and reference made to his concept 'the desert of the real', as well as the apolitical tone adopted throughout the trilogy in which the seductive nature of technology supersedes any consideration of material existence, yet the films remain eminently shallow affairs that affirm technological transcendence as inevitable and empowering.

Indeed, what is most disturbing about *The Matrix* universe is that, much like Baudrillard's panic-mongering, it warns against illusions while simultaneously inviting us to invest in them. Hence, although machines are vilified, they also offer an environment in which simulated karate fights substitute for political action. Kim Newman criticises *The Matrix* for embracing what he terms as 'a desperate solipsist wish-fulfilment vision which proposes that everything, mundane or magical, is just scene-setting for a kick-'em-in-the-head computer game in which ultimate enlightenment can be attained through skills which have been downloaded rather than learned'.[50]

Technology operates as both scourge and solution in the trilogy and reality is ultimately intangible, which might make them very postmodern, but does not necessarily make them very good films. Ian Freer describes the Wachowski brothers as having 'bought into the attendant hype and believed they were some kind of newly minted purveyors of Baudrillard-injected block-busters, cranium-filled crowd-pleasers'.[51] The intention may have been to add a level of profundity to a flimsy premise, and appears to have worked if the numerous publications aiming to fathom the meaning of the films are anything to go by,[52] yet one could claim that the trilogy has a grossly elevated status for much the same reason as postmodernism itself; utilising trendy gimmicks to revamp old ideas, aiming to be as obscure as possible in the hope that this will pass as depth, while relegating humanity to the sidelines.

While faith, sacrifice and love may be demonstrated by the beleaguered residents of Zion, nothing short of a miracle, wrought in cyberspace, is what it takes to save them, and Agent Smith further destabilises any belief in human ideals when he

mocks them as illusory concepts. Demanding to know what motivates Neo during their climactic battle together, Smith asks whether it is hope, peace, or love – and suggests that all three are as artificial as the matrix itself. While such a contention may be read as a sign of how little he understands humanity, it also makes an interesting contrast to the implicit faith in such emotions that is typically used to drive the cyborg film. Neo may ultimately defeat Smith, fuelled precisely by the motivations that are scorned as inauthentic, yet the suggestion retains a chilling note nevertheless precisely because it is hope for the human race, a desire for peace rather then conflict, and an implicit belief in love that have become the cinematic short-hand by which to gauge humanity. Contrasted against The Oracle's sugar-sweet suggestion that 'cookies need love too', Smith's dismissal of these concepts provides an intrinsically postmodern blow to such assumptions, giving us pause to wonder if he might in fact be right.

To do so is an exercise in deconstruction that might leave us little to believe in, which is essentially postmodernism's main problem. Yet although *Revolutions* toys with such cynicism, Neo's decision to sacrifice himself for humanity not only plays on the Christian allegory inferred throughout the trilogy, but on humanistic ideals also. While he has evolved to such a degree that he can no longer be called human, such gestures seek to convince us that recognisable human traits endure, no matter what the future may bring. In this regard, the trilogy concludes by shoring up the same ideals as the cyborg film, demonstrating that even as dreams of posthumanity are embraced a residual investment in specific human values is much harder to jettison.

Veronica Hollinger has argued that 'it is only by recognising the consensual nature of socio-cultural reality, which includes within itself our definitions of human nature, that we can begin to perceive the possibility of change'.[53] However, questioning the nature of reality has also proved to be a diversionary strategy within postmodern theory, as Baudrillard's obsession with surfaces and simulation testifies, and as the *Matrix* films demonstrate only too clearly. As to the 'possibility of change', postmodern rhetoric fails to envisage such an option in any progressive social sense, particularly given the tendency toward 'simultaneous acceptance and resistance' of media power, as Bukatman has put it, creating a situation in which 'image addiction is no longer posited as a disease: it has instead become the very condition of existence in postmodern culture'.[54] In his view all that remains is adaptation to these conditions and the opportunities they may bring. Conflating the cyborg with cyberpunk fantasies of 'technological symbiosis',[55] Bukatman contends that terminal identity is 'a potentially subversive reconception of the subject that situates the human and the technological as coextensive, codependent, and mutually defining . . . [which] serves as an important space of accommodation to the new and bewildering array of existential possibilities that defines our terminal reality'.[56] How this 'reconception' can be subversive if it simply accommodates us to the new is unstated, yet seems to be an intensely conservative aim rather than a radical one. The confusion is endemic within postmodern discourse, indicating a faith in technology that is never adequately justified. In fact, 'evolution not revolution' is the closest we seem to get to a politically prescriptive idea in

postmodernism, for which the cyborg has been used as a favoured marketing tool, exemplifying the bio-technical possibilities seen as intrinsically utopian to some, as well as the alleged intellectual capacity to dispel with existing assumptions.

Just as Chris Hables Gray confuses experimentation with equality, writing a 'cyborg bill of rights' that redefines freedom as the right to acquire new technologies – provided, of course, that one can afford them,[57] so Bukatman asserts that physiological adaptation is the next necessary stage for humanity. Sounding for all the world like the hyperbolic rantings of Baudrillard or Stelarc, he concludes that 'the body must become a cyborg to retain its presence in the world, resituated in technological space and refigured in technological terms'[58] – only to add, with typically ambivalence, that 'whether this represents a continuation, a sacrifice, a transcendence or a surrender of "the subject" is not certain'.[59]

What we have to gain from terminal identity or posthumanism, in terms of subjectivity, is equally unclear, particularly given the alleged absence of anything to believe in, which indicates the limits of postmodern nihilism. Patrick Novotny displays the problems evident in this twisted logic when he states that 'through the postmodern condition, the search for cultural cohesion and unitary signification is discredited' while also attempting to argue that 'postmodern culture provides political spaces and possibilities for the appropriation of communication and representational technologies'.[60] Yet without cohesion, how can anything remotely 'political' be achieved? As with other postmodern adherents, Novotny's understanding of the political is abstract in the extreme, perceiving cyberpunk as a form of resistance to what he terms as 'the cultural dominant', and even asserting that the use of parody challenges 'authoritative power'.[61] The naïve implication is that purportedly radical art always precedes political action, yet what Novotny fails to allow for is the possibility that such 'resistance' is merely commodified by the mainstream and what he ignores entirely is the extent to which parody simply diffuses the seriousness of any idea. As Dominic Strinati eloquently states:

> In postmodern culture anything can supposedly become a joke, a quotation or a pastiche in an eclectic play of style, simulations and surfaces. The definition of reality by the media and the predominance of style which makes this culture possible cannot generate any more profound values and meanings.[62]

Put simply, if everything is relegated to surface play and generic confusion then nothing is to be taken seriously. As attractive as such ideas may be in an era when fuzzy logic and breached boundaries are claimed as progressive, they ultimately work to undermine political thinking through an excess of scepticism and paucity of tenable solutions, leaving us divested of anything to believe in.

Yet if contemporary academic theory is an inadequate means of redressing societal problems then some would argue that popular art forms are an equally futile place to seek such answers. Pam Rosenthal has repudiated the view that we should expect to find political solutions within cultural products, arguing that: 'Popular culture promises, at best, to give narrative and symbolic coherence to popular questions and anxieties. It does not promise structural solutions;

historical analysis and practice – history, in a word – is what's supposed to do that.'[63]

In the case of popular culture's depiction of the cyborg however, such diverse readings have been generated that even Rosenthal's aim of 'symbolic coherence' is proved to be utterly impossible, with the ambivalence of this figure undermining any chance for coherence that might formulate any sense of subjective or political understanding. In fact, an evaluation of postmodern themes within cyborg cinema allows us to gauge the discourse from a position that displays its intrinsic vacuity. Where an indictment of Capitalism is made via the dehumanised worker portrayed in *RoboCop*, this figure fails to change the system that has produced him, thereby exemplifying a postmodern sense of fatalism. Where the cinematic cyborg seems only able to look backwards, ensnared by fake memories, like *Blade Runner*'s Rachael, or using the past as a means of consolation, like Roy Batty in his final moments, postmodernism's preoccupation with nostalgia is evidenced, thus seeming to corroborate Jameson's assertion that we are unable to imagine the future. And where electronic technology's own simulative abilities are foregrounded in such figures as *Terminator 2*'s T-1000, confounding our ability to differentiate between the real and the illusory, postmodernism's interest in self-reflexivity is taken to its limit at the expense of any deeper interrogation of meaning.

That postmodern analysis functions as a means of disengagement from political understanding is one of its greatest ironies, particularly given the fact that the discourse's main proponents, Lyotard and Baudrillard, were both former Marxists.[64] It is no doubt due to the disillusionment experienced by these theorists that postmodern rhetoric is so utterly devoid of political strategies, other than to confirm the inevitability of Capitalism. So pervasive has postmodern theory become however, that even critics who are dismissive of it have felt it necessary to use its terms in their analysis, as was noted in the critical U-turn demonstrated by both Hayles and Landon.

It is a tendency that Fred Glass displays also. Indeed, despite regarding Murphy as a cyborg with Left potential, Glass nevertheless feels compelled to evaluate the film as a postmodern text, rather than a socialist one. Citing its eclectic assemblage of parts, its satirical use of parody, and its ultimate sense of defeatism as archetypal postmodern traits is particularly disconcerting given that Glass is clearly no adherent of this discourse. In fact, he provides a timely reminder that postmodern rhetoric is not as innovative as often claimed, affirming that 'postmodernism, the emperor's new clothing, is not new: it is late modernism without the ideology of progress'.[65]

Why Glass bothers to devote such attention to postmodernism is consequently perplexing. Although he seems to view the SF genre as ideally positioned to deliver an ideological critique against Capitalism he also concurs with Jameson in viewing it as a reflection of our limited political potential, contending that SF cinema 'exhibits a genuine propensity for progressive politics in the midst of its recognition that the old ideology of progress, and/or the inevitability of socialism, is neatly tucked into the dustbin of history'.[66] Glass goes on to argue that 'without a shared vision of something alternative and better' the New Bad Future projected

in cyborg films serves to legitimate itself as the only possible way forward.[67] This is Jameson's 'atrophy of the utopian imagination'[68] given its perceived political consequences, and it is in this entrenchment of negative fatalism – or 'inverted millenarianism'[69] as Jameson has dubbed it – that postmodernism (and its alleged products) appear merely to reiterate present social conditions by offering no options. Indeed, just as Baudrillard enacts rather than analyses postmodernism, so Jameson perpetuates the fatalism that he regards as being so entrenched today, perceiving the 'world space of multinational capitalism' as a universal condition while pointedly failing to conceive of a way 'in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects',[70] and thus rendering his suggested strategy of 'cognitive mapping' seemingly redundant.

By contrast, while Glass conceives progressive implications in the cyborg, he falls back upon postmodern theory to both explain and underscore the apparent inevitability of present conditions. An attendant problem is the sheer familiarity of the films and their narratives, for if New Bad Future films can help to make a political point – as Glass suggests – then repeated allusions in films, books, comics and music videos only detract from being taken seriously; just as the seemingly endless tendency for critics to evaluate such films as symptomatic of a wider cultural hopelessness simply reiterates a cycle of despair from which there is no chance of escape.

However, not all critics have been so pessimistic about the message of such films. As Bukatman has asserted:

> There *is* a utopia to be found in the science fiction film, a utopia that lies in *being human*, and if utopia is always defined in relation to an *other*, a non-utopia, then the numberless aliens, androids, and evil computers of the SF film are the barbarians storming the gates of humanity.[71]

Cyborg films shore up this utopian ideal, yet in granting certain cyborgs a nominal 'human' status they also efface any neat distinctions between the human and its presumed 'other'. Including cyborgs within the realm of humanity implies that conventional assumptions about essence and identity have to be re-evaluated. From a postmodern perspective, this is regarded as positive in itself, yet cyborg films also reconnect the disparate elements of their hybrid protagonists into a favoured interpretation of humanity, one that retrieves a sense of wholeness that is anathema to postmodern interpretations of subjectivity.

How new technologies both inform and influence identity, as well as trouble conventional notions of authenticity and differentiation, is of paramount concern within the discourse, tending to view the perceived erosion of a discrete sense of subjectivity with approval on the grounds that fragmentation and uncertainty are a more accurate appraisal of how conflicted humanity actually is. However, some critics have argued that, far from being a contemporary phenomenon, these feelings have a history that is at least as long as imperialism, with Stuart Hall contending that although 'dispersal and fragmentation' are claimed as recent experiences, 'what the discourse of postmodernism has produced is not something new

but a kind of recognition of where identity always was at'.[72] In reference to Baudrillard's claims about an 'implosion' of the real, Hall makes the equally valid point that 'three quarters of the human race have not yet entered the era of what we are pleased to call the "real"',[73] thereby alerting us to the relative privilege of such intellectual games-playing.

We have encountered similar detractions by theorists such as Balsamo, who has proved equally wary of the attempt to universalise and even applaud dislocated subjectivities. Indeed, it is in its attempt to extend alienation and uncertainty to all that many have felt more than a little resentful of postmodern claims, particularly where they are seemingly left without identifying co-ordinates, or any means by which alliances can be formed.

The cyborg's introduction to identity politics was intended precisely to achieve this aim, with the accompanying idea that a new means of affiliation might be afforded by dismantling specific divisions, with Haraway suggesting that 'the acid tools of postmodernism' might aid what she implies as a necessary 'dissolving [of] Western selves in the interests of survival'.[74] However, her own inability to relinquish particular dualisms has been proven, indicating that postmodern deconstruction is neither necessarily progressive, or, in some ways, even possible – particularly given the critical investment that tends to be made with established modes of thought and the attendant assumptions therein. The techno-utopian elements of Haraway's cyborg identity are additionally questionable, for as Andrew Ross has pointed out, the cyborg remains 'a myth that swings both ways',[75] and any claims toward empowerment suggested by new technologies must consequently be balanced by the conflicting recognition that they may equally portend improved means of subjection.

Carol Mason describes cyborgism as constituting 'a reading practice (that) reveals how subjectivities are made and remade – how they are reproduced'[76] – yet is wary of the consequences of such deconstruction and its accompanying idea that all identity is culturally constructed. She takes Haraway and postmodernism to task for the danger of 'slippage' – the fear that history is obscured with the loss of precise definition – thus revising a criticism we came across earlier with regard to the cyborg's apparent threat to the demarcation of different social groups. There is something to be said for this criticism, for if the divisions that exist between people are elided then the historical experiences that contribute to our identity as individuals are obliterated also, and with them a past that many would argue should not be forgotten. However, at what point does a divided history serve to perpetuate societal division into the future?

How we are to transcend the inequalities and uncertainties of the present and establish the faith necessary to creating a progressive future is a huge dilemma. In contrast to Mason's evident distrust, Viviane Casimir perceives the cyborg as a positive new beginning, viewing it as 'a representation of a new cultural power, a powerful discourse that allows new identity, politics, and social space'.[77] This claim also warrants some scrutiny however, particularly as implicit within such optimism is a decisive break with the past. Casimir contends that 'the cyborg's discourse is that of difference, its politics of transgression and its social

identity give it no roots'.[78] Yet without 'roots', without a definitive history and accompanying sense of consciousness and identity, how can the cyborg claim to be political? Wiped clean of history the cyborg becomes an innocent that, while possible in an imaginary sense, seems too fantastical to relate to contemporary identity or material existence.

In fact, even in an imaginary sense, in the screen fictions evaluated here, the cyborg is never so innocent, with an identity that has been projected upon it by various competing sources. If the predicament faced by Alex Murphy in fighting against implanted programming is a powerful indictment of prevailing economic conditions to some, he is also a reactionary 'hypermasculine' killer for others. Additionally, if Deckard's job as a blade runner makes him a similarly enslaved proletariat exploited by his employers (who could also be his creators), his 'hard-boiled dick' persona, coupled with the fact that he only shoots female replicants, combine to make him a less than heroic misogynist. And if Eve VIII is a strong feminist role-model who transgresses boundaries by fulfilling her alter ego's fantasies, she is also decisively punished, along with virtually all her cyborg sisters. In short, there is no cinematic cyborg that will be universally read in a particular way, or which can be unequivocally celebrated as progressive or utopian, and this seems to symbolise the present circumstances of a new millennium in which partial, fragmented subjectivities are pronounced as a positive sign of emerging consciousness, and any attempt at unification is accused of reductive essentialism. The conflicting readings made of the cinematic cyborg reveals that, far from being outmoded or eroded, what postmodernists have referred to as 'grand theories' of the past remain all too evident in their use within academic theory and popular cultural criticism, yet they also illustrate the extent that the ambivalence and fragmentation so celebrated by postmodernists may all too often result in a fundamental incoherence, one that strains against making any groundwork for change possible.

The attempt to argue that a fragmented identity is now universal can be understood as a means of overcoming divisions in the absence of any coherent political agenda, yet if even 'socialist-feminist' critics such as Haraway cannot perceive an affinity between men and women via cyborg identity, the possibilities for establishing coalitions beyond gender and physicality appear similarly constrained. The extent of division within the academic arena testifies to the difficulties of attempting to achieve some measure of unity, even at a discursive level, while claims that all such divisions can somehow be effaced via a new posthuman identity seem fundamentally erroneous also.

Postmodernism may have resulted from a state of discord and disenchantment among those on the Left, yet, like the cyborg, it has failed to bridge the resulting divide. Despite appearing to herald a brave new world in which old dogmas and discourses are rendered obsolete, as this chapter suggests, eradicating established beliefs has proven to be much harder than critics have claimed, while additionally running the risk of having nothing to put in their place other than cynicism and detachment. Although it initially appeared to have some radical potential in questioning established beliefs, postmodernism swiftly became subsumed by its

own motifs and is now popularised as a style-over-content buzz word used by lazy reviewers to describe practically anything that lacks originality.

Nothing has yet replaced it however, and the urge to deconstruct is still claimed by some as a positive means of redefining ourselves. David Porush asserts, for example, that 'the best weapon in defence of our humanness is to continue to deconstruct the natural and the artificial in both technology and imagination even as we expand our own definition of human to include vat-grown flesh-wearers, cyborgs, androids, AI's and other autopoetic aliens'.[79] Part of this process may be to abandon the notion of essential traits, for as Porush further contends: 'What aspect of humanity makes us human? Our flesh? Our CNS? [central nervous system] Our thoughts? Our handiwork? Where's that line over which lies inhumanity? The technology is us, man. White magic or black, it doesn't make a difference. Natural and artificial? Obsolete distinctions.'[80]

If 'technology is us' then we cannot ultimately escape it, destroy it, or ignore it but must instead come to terms with its place in our lives. The cyborg may thus prove to be an important means of accommodating technology's impact on human identity in the twenty-first century, as a number of theorists have argued, yet questions of economic power remain conspicuous by their absence in theoretical attempts to embrace posthumanism and are rendered all the more pressing because of this.

As this chapter has made clear, postmodern rhetoric has failed to address such issues, with a tendency to view technological forms as operating independently of any human agency, while the problematic use of the term 'late Capitalism' suggests a final and inexorable stage has been reached; implying an ending where we have none. Further problems lie in the points already mentioned: the seductive nature of new technologies becoming the primary focus for critical analysis; the perpetuation of binary thinking; and the fatalism that seems innate to postmodernism. From the early promise this discourse offered in appearing to stem from political concerns, these are disappointments indeed, while the marked absence of any concrete questioning of material existence demonstrates the folly of mistaking metaphysical speculation about the nature of a technologically mediated society for a genuinely political understanding of reality.

No matter how radical some have considered it, postmodern discourse reiterates the seeming inevitability of Capitalism and both the cyberpunk and cyborg fictions that are so frequently claimed as its products can be seen to perform much the same ideological function. In the absence of any faith in our ability to create a more equitable and inclusive future through political means, the emphasis is placed instead on utilising technological resources as a means of empowerment. Although some level of alliance with technology is clearly necessary, this type of rhetoric is also in danger of simply endorsing myths of escapism and transcendence – while reality itself is rendered increasingly insecure.

Furthermore, because Capitalism has provided audiences with the fictional cyberpunks and cyborgs that so frequently occupy heroic positions in popular culture, it arguably provides an outlet through which potentially oppositional ideas can be channelled and controlled. This is perfectly exemplified in the *Matrix*

trilogy, which obscures the existence of Capitalism while happily utilising ideas that have stemmed from its critique. The notion of hegemonic reality is thus turned into an SF cliché, tapping into a contemporary paranoia about the power of new technologies that is ultimately sublimated by awe, making an illusory reality infinitely preferable to the mundane 'meat' existence that is its alternative, and further demonstrating a postmodern proclivity to play with serious ideas at the expense of negating them.

By contrast, *RoboCop* and *Blade Runner* may possess a number of postmodern traits, yet the anti-Capitalist sentiment in such films is indicative of an enduring Leftist impulse which remains notable by comparison, even if, as Glass acknowledges, a revisionist tendency is also apparent in such films that accommodates the seemingly inevitable New Bad Future rather than providing any alternatives to it. In a similar vein, later films such as *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3* utilise cyborg protagonists as important allies in staging a revolutionary vanguard against dystopian conditions, thus ostensibly challenging postmodernism's fatalistic vision of the future, even if they are similarly hampered by simplistic plotting and the notable absence of any new organisational structure to put in Capitalism's place. However, these ARE fictional products, after all – created primarily in order to entertain – and if they cannot envisage an alternative future, that is not to say that one does not exist.

While change is mainly conceived on an internal, rather than societal, level in such films, some level of progress is discernible nevertheless, particularly as cyborgs are motivated by a sense of responsibility for others, which lies at the root of any progressive political outlook. Furthermore, even if later cyborg narratives appear to redeem Capitalism because it appears to have produced a superior version of ourselves, some reassurance may nevertheless be found in the modified humanism that results. Indeed, perhaps these celluloid images of a humanity that is mediated by technology yet rooted in the past may signify our greatest faith in the continued survival of the species, testifying as they do in the ability of specific values to exist in the face of adversity, including an integral notion of the human.

In this regard the cyborg film can be seen to perform its own Voight-Kampff test on its audience by gauging our humanity as it was finally defined by Philip K. Dick: as a measure of our capacity to feel empathy with others. It is perhaps more for its ability to elicit such emotions that cinema is at its most progressive, not necessarily in providing a blue-print for the future, but in depicting social relations that touch us at the core of our being. Telotte suggests that images of human artifice 'can help us to know ourselves once more, to discern our humanity, and thus to *re*construct our sense of self', further contending that they present 'a possibility for subversion, individuality and self-realization, by suggesting that the schizophrenia this world seems to foster, the imaginary it constructs, can be turned against it to free up the self'.[81] In hoping that these films will reflect some essence of humanity back to us a familiar tautology makes itself evident in Telotte's postmodern rhetoric, claiming that certain media products, despite contributing to the allegedly 'schizophrenic' present, may contain specific 'truths' from which we can all learn. SF cinema is thus charged with the role of reconstructing identity,

and thus serving as an antidote to dehumanising conditions, reiterating the paradoxical nature of the cyborg itself, yet also one of its most appealing elements.

Postmodernism, on the other hand, is clearly too constrained by its own contradictions to offer a satisfactorily unified sense of time and place – the key co-ordinates in Jameson's concept of 'cognitive mapping' – thus failing to orient a way forward. Although it attempts to make sense of our increasingly technologised environment, its lack of economic grounding compounds its unfeasibility as a political strategy, exacerbating its superficial nature. Moreover, while contemporary SF cinema illustrates many postmodern themes, particularly in narratives that focus on artificial humans, these films are not simply a product of what Jameson has termed as 'the cultural logic of late capitalism' and implying that this is the case simply does these texts a disservice.

In fact, evidence of postmodern qualities, far from enhancing a specific text, can be seen to detract from the ability to say anything of originality or worth, as is proven by a film such as *Solo* (Barba, 1996) which incorporates elements of other films without offering anything of its own. Recycling the plot of *The Magnificent Seven*, its cyborg marine embodies US paternalism (even as he appears to defy it) by teaching Latin American villagers how to fight, while the 'substitute father' theme of *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop 3* are also revised in providing a tough but sensitive role model to a young boy – who equips him, in turn, with a better understanding of human values. In sum, it proves what postmodernists label as pastiche to be no more than derivative nonsense, confirming that possessing postmodern traits does not necessarily make for a better film, or, for that matter, a more interesting cyborg. Indeed, the same might be said of *Terminator 3*, which signalled a return to the classic cyborg movie yet simply recycles the plot of its predecessor, including an uninspired variation on the same jokes.

As the cyborg film became increasingly familiar, so postmodern theory's ability to inspire new ideas has similarly waned, becoming lost in its own concept of image seduction, while its analytic framework has been imposed with such rigidity as to become yet another totalising discourse. Or perhaps it is the simple psychological fact that we have now made it into the new millennium – with the attendant anticlimax that follows such a transition – that has made so many of Baudrillard's hyperbolic rantings now seem like the exaggerations they always were?

That the cyborg entered popular consciousness at precisely the same time as cyberpunk writers and cultural theorists were writing about technology's impact on human identity is attributable to more than mere coincidence for all were clearly motivated by the need to describe a society undergoing significant transition. Indeed, some justification can accordingly be made for Baudrillard's assertion that SF and theory can no longer be held separate, particularly postmodern theory, for just as the genre has reflected the concerns of its surrounding culture, so postmodern critics have aimed to demonstrate the relevance of their claims by taking examples from popular cultural forms, including SF. Yet while it is easy to understand how the two have become interrelated, it should also be noted that SF had been asking what impact an increasingly technologised world will have upon identity, social relations, and our concept of the real long before academics named such issues as

postmodern, producing a powerful new icon in the cyborg that has acquired far greater longevity than anyone could have imagined. Nevertheless, because each have contributed to the cyborg's formation it seems only fair to award joint custody to both SF cinema – which has provided the context for its popularity, after all, and to postmodern theory – without which its multiple layers of significance, and the diversity of theoretical interpretations yielded, would not have been possible.

Where the cyborg may go from here is a question that remains open. The concluding chapter will question how this figure has expanded our understanding of subjectivity, asking what options it provides as a unifying metaphor, and questioning what semblance of hope it might salvage for the future. Perhaps the most notable tendency among the 'hopeful monsters' that have made their way across our screens in recent years is that, despite the air of despondency noted by countless postmodernists, and the increasingly adamant claims that we must jettison an essential notion of what it is to be human, a residual but insistent faith in this ideal persists, even in the most unlikely quarters.

8

Summing Up the Cyborg: Towards a Conclusion

Given the variety of readings discussed, and the contradictions outlined therein, aiming to provide a singular and conclusive interpretation of the cyborg seems an impossible feat – almost as difficult, in fact, as determining what it means to be human. Nonetheless, this final chapter draws together the disparate threads of inquiry that have coalesced around the cyborg in an attempt to discern its relevance to this crucial question. Although theorists have appropriated this figure to make a number of assertions, one specific area has been focused on here: that of the cinematic cyborg's relevance to contemporary subjectivity. As we have seen, this issue alone has resulted in substantial conflict of opinion, with diverse claims made as to what cyborg identity means and to whom it applies. Uncertainty, in a word, is what debates around the cyborg have indicated most prominently, seeming to reflect a lack of conviction and coherence in the ideas used to make sense of who we are.

Just why the metaphorical conjunction of human and machine should have such affinity with how we now perceive ourselves stems from a number of likely factors. The partiality and 'constructed-ness' implied by the metaphor appeals to those who denounce totalistic accounts of subjectivity, with the accompanying claim that the cyborg or posthuman can propel current thinking beyond existing dogmas and thus enable a new mode of orientation – ideas that have typically been linked with a postmodern perspective. Conversely however, the cyborg has also been viewed as a marginalised figure with whom various different groups might identify – a stance that severely contradicts the former belief that such divisions, and the discourses that account for them, are no longer applicable. The two claims are clearly at odds with one another, forming yet another inconsistency in terms of cyborg theory and the contrasting perception of social relations it has provided, reminding us that, with a creature that is formed of incongruous elements, it is folly to seek any simple answers.

This research has evaluated the context in which the cyborg emerged and the theoretical associations that have underpinned its importance in both popular culture and academia. The primary concern throughout has been to examine the various metaphorical interpretations that have been made of this figure, assessing how theories such as Marxism, feminism, and postmodernism have

each invested in the cyborg in order to make sense of both identity and society in transition. The readings offered have focused on economic position, gender, nationality, and family relations – factors that have been deemed increasingly important in evaluating what makes us who we are in the twenty-first century – yet the results have provided only partial answers, indicating that the central discourses employed within identity politics are loaded with ambiguity and internal dissension.

As has been demonstrated, the cyborg's contradictory nature is paralleled by the conflicting critical interpretations made of it, uncovering in the process the frequent ruptures that underlie and undermine the discursive logic of the theories themselves. The cyborg's greatest value may thus be to shed light upon the difficulty we have in making sense of contemporary identity, particularly given the analytical tools at our disposal. Ironically, although its partial and contradictory nature are what first attracted scholarly interest in the cyborg, particularly its presumed potential to do away with paradigms of the past, this has not proven to be the case. In fact, while Haraway conceived the cyborg as a means of providing a 'way out of the maze of dualisms'[1] that govern Western epistemologies, the interpretations made of it appear to have made them ever more entrenched. The problem is an all too human one, for although Haraway asserts that 'there is no drive in cyborgs to produce total theory',[2] the same cannot be said of those attempting to make sense of them, each of whom have ascribed this figure with a specific understanding of social relations. For Marxists it is a powerful representative of working-class interests within an oppressive economic system; for feminists it is a useful device for making explicit the degree to which gender roles are intrinsically artificial; and for postmodernists the cyborg/simulacra is an ideal metaphor of conditions within 'late industrial' society, representing the extent to which mass reproduction and sophisticated media technologies have rendered the concept of originality and authenticity intensely problematic.

The cyborg's applicability to such a wide range of discourses, and the opportunity it provides to interrogate them from a new vantage point, makes it an important intellectual tool and it is in aiming to fully explicate this quality that has partly formed the rationale for this book. A further objective has been to assess the cyborg's applicability as a unifying metaphor, querying, in turn, whether the range of claims made about it can ever be reconciled into a mutual understanding of who we are, and beyond this, where we might go from here.

It is because it resists any totalising interpretation that the cyborg's usefulness as a means of potential coalition is most apparent. By not belonging to any one race, gender or class, it seems ideally suited to transcend the divisions created by such distinctions, potentially inspiring people to identify with this figure, and perhaps even towards creating a more inclusive future. This was seemingly Haraway's intention when she suggested that the cyborg had 'a natural feel for united front politics'.[3] However, the prospects for forming any such alliances have been marred by critical interpretations that continue to lay claims of ownership and essence, reiterating ideas that are both inaccurate and divisive, and largely failing to live up to the expectations critics had of it.

Indeed, the symbolic open-ness of the fictional cyborg has provided such a diversity of meanings that it defies and de-limits any singular reading. Commenting on this ambivalence, Hugh Gusteson has asserted that: 'The cinematic cyborg can function as a Rorshasch to provoke and focus debates on the politics of technology at the end of the second millennium.'[4] The metaphor of Rorshasch's psychological inkblot test is an apt one because it highlights the extent to which anyone can make what they will out of such a figure, with readings extending beyond the 'politics of technology' to include a variety of subjects. As we have seen, theorists have imprinted their own theoretical preoccupations on cyborg films, generating ideas that are frequently at odds with one another. While undoubtedly useful as an analytical device, and inspiring in the range of ideas it has attracted, the resulting inability to attribute any coherent meaning to the cyborg inevitably limits its political potential, with every claim attached to it immediately refuted by a conflicting idea carried within itself. However it is also this intrinsic ambiguity that may help to render explicit what Gusteson terms as 'the fractal quality of texts, ideologies and people'.[5] After all, the cyborg is a productive discursive tool precisely because its own hybrid nature helps to reveal the corresponding partiality of differing ideologies and the shaky foundations upon which they are based, thus urging us to keep looking for more accurate and inclusive answers.

In the various readings explored, a number of problems have been revealed in how identity is currently conceived, yet the main conclusion reached in terms of understanding what it now means to be human is that this remains a notional and in some ways highly controversial subject, particularly given the tendency to denounce any attempt at universals. Where people once questioned how humans were to be distinguished from animals and machines, the most pressing issue today appears to be how to differentiate humans from one another. As has been noted, the quandary that results from insisting on marking identity through emphasising difference is that such divisions are merely perpetuated, often via the most reductive of arguments.

The cyborg's potential as a means of fostering alliances and symbolising a new way forward is short-circuited by such tendencies, as much as its own intrinsic ambiguity. This would seem to be the inevitable price paid for being so flexible, for despite exposing the numerous ideological flaws in how we have come to see the world, the cyborg's ability to provide any solutions remains questionable. Nevertheless, it remains an important cultural phenomenon not simply because of the critical attention it has received, or the way in which it demonstrates the partiality of existing theories, but in the issues it has brought to the fore. Closer analysis of the cycle has manifested various themes and concerns that remain all too pertinent in making sense of contemporary existence, asking, for example, how free are we as human beings, especially when positioned within Capitalist relations of power? What difficulties coexist with when trying to establish a class identity today, and what impact does this have for Marxism? To what extent is gender constructed via specific cultural norms and how much can parody adequately challenge existing dualisms? How relevant are issues of race and nationality? To what extent are they discrete divisions or strongly contested terms? In what way,

if at all, does hybridity offer a more accurate definition of experience – including migration, displacement, inter-racial relationships, bi-cultural upbringing, and the ensuing conflicts encountered therein? What scope does technology offer in improving life chances through genetic manipulation? How might such technologies contribute to changing family structures? How might they contribute to social divisions? What level of access and control can be expected for such developments, and what sort of society might we expect also? How have redundancies in traditional male occupations and the breakdown of marriages affected male self-esteem? Is the 'New Man' a marketing tool designed to target male consumerism, an attempt to disprove the continued existence of patriarchy, or a sign that masculinity is as potentially open to change as femininity? How has the female-headed household been represented in contemporary culture? What ramifications does this new model of the family have for Freudo-Lacanian assessments of self, based as they are on a largely outmoded notion of the nuclear family, and why, given the relative obsolescence of this model, do ideals around it persist? How has 'media culture' – the sophisticated information and entertainment technologies used in advanced industrial nations – affected our understanding of reality, or of individual consciousness? Finally, in the wake of the post-glasnost erosion of the Soviet Empire, and with it a discrediting of Communist ideology, what ideological foundations exist for an alternative to Capitalism, and what hope is there of achieving progressive social change?

These questions circulate around contemporary subjectivity, indicating areas of intense concern. That cyborg narratives have provided a means by which to articulate these ideas is testimony to their complexity. The rich diversity of readings generated is also indicative of the importance placed upon certain cultural forms by critics, corroborating their significance as social documents.

The cultural factors surrounding the cyborg's emergence in both cinema and the academy are intrinsic to understanding it, as is the way in which these films have altered over time. Developing in a right-wing political climate in which new technologies were ambivalently viewed, the cinematic cyborg was initially situated in unease and uncertainty, and has seemingly worked towards establishing greater reassurance. From its inception in the l980s the cyborg's depiction on screen underwent a notable transition from a troubling potentially radical figure to one that was recuperated by mainstream film, with the customary narrative tactics of family values and romance being used to render it both acceptable and familiar. Although it had always oscillated between critique and conformity, with sentiment frequently used to counter the political questions raised, by the 1990s the cyborg had become a dependable stalwart of benign humanistic ideals. The cycle's 'agenda', in other words, shifted from criticising the erosion of social values under Capitalism to claiming that humanity's most positive traits were inherently located in its very products. The transition could be described as more revisionist than revolutionary, accommodating fears of dehumanisation and change by showing technology to be a powerful ally, as well as a vital means of survival. Fictional 'hero of the future', John Connor, makes an interesting statement in this regard at the conclusion of *Terminator 3*, stating that humanity's 'destiny was never to stop Skynet, it was

to survive it'. Whether this is evidence of fatalism, defeatism or pragmatism is a matter of perspective, yet the sense of determinism is clear. Disaster cannot be avoided in such films, and neither can technology, implying the need to equip ourselves for an uncertain future as best we can.

The message inferred, and repeated throughout the cycle, is that in the absence of being able to change society itself, all we are left with is the ability to change ourselves. Glass has maintained that the cyborg functions as a 'cultural transitional object' – a psychological means of adapting to a changing world.[6] This begs the question of whether such narratives are fundamentally conservative, aiming to reassure audiences that human identity can withstand any threat, while redeeming technology as an inevitable, and potentially beneficial, part of our lives. As Glass notes, concerns are both voiced and sublimated via cinematic cyborgs which are 'displayed in a manner that allows social anxiety to be expressed and defended against simultaneously',[7] yet if a dilution of political ideas is evident as the cycle has progressed, more recent examples in related narratives continue this trend.

The *Matrix* films are a case in point, providing an image of the future in which humans are enslaved by a monstrous technology, yet where rebellion is associated with fantasies of disembodiment made possible by the same machines. The matrix is, as Morpheus puts it, 'a world without rules or controls, without borders or boundaries – a world where anything is possible', and despite being fundamentally illusory, and dangerously deceptive, it is also infinitely more attractive than the actual conditions of existence for humanity, and ultimately preserved rather than destroyed. Humans do not win out against the machines by the end of the trilogy, they form an uneasy (and unconvincing) truce, while reality itself becomes an abstract concept.

As was explored in the last chapter, this thematic tendency reflects postmodernism's influence, and has become increasingly common. The interrogation of memory and reality has become a discernible motif in recent SF, questioning the individual's ability to withstand manipulation. In *Dark City* (Proyas, 1997) malevolent aliens hold humanity captive in order to carry out psychological testing; *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998) satirises television's power to define reality; and more recent releases such as *Cypher* (Natali, 2002) and *Paycheck* (Woo, 2003) continue this theme, similarly questioning the extent to which identity and memory are not only intertwined, but fallible with both films exploring corporate espionage and brainwashing in their vision of high-tech paranoia. Such films rework old fears concerning the loss of individual identity and volition in a technological age, and the cyborg trope of repressed memory is also refashioned in each as the means by which protagonists regain a sense of self. They consequently infer that no matter how manipulative and confusing reality becomes, an intrinsic identity is recoverable, yet while such a conclusion is undoubtedly optimistic, the fact that metaphysical speculation almost completely obscures any political ideas is worrying indeed.

Admittedly, cyborg cinema's equivalent capacity to articulate such concerns is not without problems of its own. Even at its most radical, although a critique is formulated against specific social conditions, including the tendency to question

the dehumanising tendencies of Capitalist society, the notion of any alternative system is negated entirely – which surely limits any impact such criticism can have. In fact, the cycle has tended to skirt around the parameters of political discourse without delineating problems in anything more than a simplified, narratively functional sense, and without offering any real solutions. Despite touching on a socialist critique, the films emerging from this canon patently avoid providing any socialist answers, such as a revolutionary overthrow of the state, or the creation of a new mode of production, opting to invest instead in a modified humanism, with the accompanying suggestion that the affirmation of positive values will somehow lessen the importance of economic division.

The limitations of this contention are exemplified in *Metropolis*' denouement of a heart mediating between the 'head' and 'hands' of its society, for while this gesture promises reform, it fails to address the actual causes of inequality, thus proving that good intentions alone are insufficient to effect a more harmonious and mutually rewarding future. Nevertheless, in depicting the oppression of workers, and suggesting that they deserve to be better treated than machines, humanistic values are used to uphold the idea of human rights.

In the same vein, cyborg cinema has tended to extend values that intersect with progressive political aims at a basic yet crucial level. In affirming the apparent universality of a benign humanity, an urge towards establishing collaborative principles is shown; through arguing that people are fundamentally alike, differences are elided in favour of establishing a level of kinship; and in defining humanity through the ability to demonstrate a degree of ethical integrity towards others, a notion of social (if not quite socialist) responsibility is maintained.

In fact, cyborg cinema has increasingly shown that, far from threatening humanity's uniqueness, technological life-forms may be incorporated within our ranks by upholding specific values. This development bridges the divide between the human and the machine, while also lessening fears about the future by demonstrating that a humanistic worldview is not at odds with a technological one. Indeed, Andrew Ross asserts that both are 'versions of the same story about development and growth'.[8] Although humanism has been perceived as a reactionary ideology, one that has been linked to oppressive practices, such an assumption demands to be reconsidered, particularly given the many positive traits that are all too frequently ignored. Cyborg cinema's commitment to humanism is perhaps its central distinguishing feature, and ultimately it needs to be questioned if this is its greatest achievement also.

Elaine L. Graham offers the usual critique of humanism as an ideology that 'implicitly privileges the virtues of bourgeois, White, rational masculinity',[9] thereby reiterating the popular assumption that the model of humanity offered by this ethos is inherently biased. Yet Graham also acknowledges that within a humanistic value-system lie the principles of progressive social existence, pertinently asking: 'Can the narratives of hope and obligation, and the vitality of political and ethical discourse, survive after humanism?'[10] Such a concern is crucial, and I would argue that not only are these ideals integral to humanity's survival, but that they cannot truly be separated from a humanistic standpoint.

Indeed, without humanism there would be no academic philosophising, no progressive notion of change, and none of the discourses that have since emerged in academic debate. It is perhaps necessary to qualify the idea of 'progress' as distinct from any mission to exploit or endanger the planet or its inhabitants, but to define it instead as the belief that we can aspire to become better than we are, in a moral sense. Humanism's original aim was to fulfil both individual and societal potential, stemming from an ethos that viewed humanity as a sovereign subject, equipped with both reason and 'higher' emotions such as altruism, and intent on using technology in order to exercise greater control over existence. The fictional cyborg's 'humanisation' springs precisely from this faith in rationality and morality. Cyborgs achieve human status when they exhibit such values as compassion, empathy and recognition of 'human' values – and while these are patently ideals, they are nevertheless intrinsic to any political urge for democracy and understanding. Of course, cinematic cyborgs have not always reflected the best of human qualities, but in showing the majority to be capable of respecting life a blow is struck for the human race, and a reminder of the qualities through which individuality and 'humanness' proven. That these characteristics are perhaps as constructed as the cyborg itself is beside the point, just as it does not really matter where cyborgs come from, or what they are made of, if their intentions are genuine.

Alison Landsberg's notion of 'prosthetic memories' is a useful concept in this regard, explaining the term as 'memories which do not come from a person's lived experience' yet which 'motivate his actions' nevertheless,[11] she argues that *Total Recall*'s Doug Quaid and *Blade Runner*'s Rick Deckard act according to a conscience that may be stimulated by artificial means yet which is authentic nonetheless. Although the main problem in both examples, as was argued previously, is that each character seems to be more motivated by romantic interest than any direct political concerns, they nevertheless remind us that we are all ethical beings – equipped with a conscience and the ability to make decisions. Quaid and Deckard each opt to forsake their former positions of privilege and, despite having been given fake memories and identities, select these as a preferred mode of identity. They accordingly prove that 'prosthetic memories' are as valid as any other in terms of enabling the individual to articulate themselves. Landsberg additionally implies that cinematic narratives of this kind, although equally 'prosthetic' in the sense that they are intrinsically artificial, are no less valid in terms of the values they uphold, and suggests that they may even influence audiences towards what she terms as an 'ethics of personhood'[12] by which a degree of commonality is evoked between people.

The notion that certain media products might have a positive effect on our attitude to one another reveals an obvious level of wish-fulfilment, yet the idea that films may be used to enable social cohesion rather than division is also appealing precisely because of the dissension that is so apparent in critical theory and wider reality, suggesting that a level of unity might be fostered by watching specific films. Although Landsberg offers no evidence for this obviously simplistic assertion, an important set of ideas can nevertheless be seen in the cyborg film that are crucial to both personal empowerment and political thinking. Most

prominently, in questioning the basis of identity and (re)gaining a sense of self, cyborgs demonstrate that resistance to dehumanising conditions is possible. Indeed, Deckard and Quaid prove that they are not passive victims, but active agents who refuse to be part of a corrupt system. Landsberg contends that by watching such films audiences may similarly become invested with a renewed understanding of ethical considerations, founded as they are on traversing ostensible differences and establishing a level of kinship with others. She claims, in other words, that fictional narratives may themselves be the 'prosthetic' means by which we may all become humanised, with specific films perceived as a deus ex machina that will not only create needed alliances between different social groups, but which will also make us better people.

Finding some level of affinity with the cyborg characters cited above would be the first step to such an outcome, one that might enable the understanding that we too may have more in common than we might care to admit. Given the evident divisions this book has uncovered, such commonality is all too easy to deride, yet cinema's potential function in aiding this recognition may be crucial. In likening audience members to *Total Recall*'s Doug Quaid, Glass has commented that: 'We are all amnesiacs, both in this individual psychological sense and in a broader representation: as victims of social amnesia, the peculiar art-historical mechanism of our culture that works to keep rulers and ruled in their place.'[13] A number of implications are contained within this concept of 'amnesia': ignoring how power is brokered within society, for example, or inadequately scrutinising the part we may ourselves play in perpetuating divisive ideas. Yet it also implies, on a much simpler level, forgetting that there are levels of kinship that exist between people. The 'humanity' recovered in cyborg films may thus parallel the audience's own potential to acquire a more accurate view of ourselves, our relation to the world, and perhaps also to one another.

This idea is in keeping with Telotte's contention that SF cinema's artificial humans may help to reflect:

> a growing awareness of our own level of artifice, of constructedness, of how we often seem controlled by a kind of internalized program not so different from the sort that drives the artificial beings that abound in our films – and, perhaps, of how the films that detail these anxieties assist in our construction.[14]

Science fiction cinema is thus charged with the responsibility of helping to form subjectivity, even of making us human, as Landsberg also suggests, and Telotte further contends that 'we need this public image, this robotic display, to jog our sense of humanity',[15] yet whether such an endeavour is consciously intended on the part of film-makers is another matter. Garrett Stewart perceives 'the constituents of the genre itself as a limit testing investigation of the human',[16] which may be seen as a crucial component of the cyborg film, for while technology may have helped to produce a new life-form in the cyborg, these figures are evaluated according to their degree of resemblance to ourselves, potentially inviting us to re-think our notion of humanity.

The use of certain motifs within cyborg cinema might consequently invite us to reconsider the degree of affinity we have with one another, for what all cinematic cyborgs have in common touches upon core aspects of human existence. Perhaps the most obvious point to make with regard to the cyborg's kinship to humans is that they are mortal. Cyborg bodies, for all their relative strength, are not indestructible machines and they frequently die in order to emphasise this fact, underlining a fundamental link that we all have as a species. That these figures often express themselves through violence obviously allows a degree of spectacle that helps to add action and drama, yet it also symbolises the conflicts they face and, ultimately, the physical vulnerability which is shared by cyborgs and humans alike. This is ironic, for of all the 'machine dreams' the cyborg encapsulates, the fantasy of immortality is perhaps its most compelling attraction, yet one that cinema has tended to denounce. Indeed, films such as *RoboCop* and *Universal Soldier* use the motif of the human resurrected as cyborg in order to articulate how technology's promise of control over life itself may lead to exploitation even beyond the grave.

That the cyborg protagonists of such films are not simply mindless automatons, but sentient beings, makes this invasion of their bodies and subsequent manipulation all the more troubling. It also expresses another degree of commonality with which we might identify. Cinematic cyborgs, to varying degrees, have a consciousness, being both intelligent and reflective. Yet despite their self-awareness, they frequently lack autonomy in the programming that is given to them. The ensuing tension between having a degree of individuality and being constrained in how it is exercised is an experience that we are all, to some extent, faced with. In this regard cyborgs not only encapsulate the metaphysical fact of our limited existence, but question our relative freedom also. That such figures tend to exceed their programming, and acquire greater independence, is an avowal of our own abilities to do the same – testifying to our capacity to be more than passive subjects who are variously acted upon, but active agents able to affirm our individuality.

Beyond the assertion of individual will however, lies the collective responsibility we have towards others, and herein lies the third major alliance between cinema's depiction of cyborgs and what may be termed as 'the human condition'. Consequently, it is not only consciousness but evidence of a conscience that must be exhibited by any cinematic cyborg intent on coexisting with humans, thus reiterating the idea that who we are is measured by how we behave. This returns us to Philip K. Dick's articulation that what finally separates the human from the machine is the ability to empathise with others and to act morally. As Dick puts it, 'the authentic human being is one of us who instinctively knows what he should not do, and, in addition, he will balk at doing it'.[17] Roy Batty's act of compassion towards the man hired to kill him, Alex Murphy's ultimate refusal to carry out the orders of a corrupt organisation, and Doug Quaid's work to liberate those he had originally helped to subdue all testify to a compelling faith in the need to become moral beings, with cinematic cyborgs serving as ambassadors for this very humanistic philosophy.

In some ways this may be the closest thing we have to a single unifying belief-system that is mutually applicable, reminding us of a commonality that has mostly been negated. What Landsberg terms as an 'ethics of personhood' is founded on the recognition of a specific entitlement that applies to all people; irrespective of gender, race, class, or any other factor. It is therefore no less than the avowal of human rights. In this sense, while it remains admittedly limited, the cyborg film carries out an unstated socialist project in reminding us of our responsibilities towards one another, while making a critique of specific conditions that are considered detrimental to social relations. As has been pointed out, this project is not sustained through any politically viable solutions and is otherwise flawed in its vision, with the socially conscious cyborg being too male and too white to seem like a universal icon. However, in the 'unite and fight' ethos that so many cyborg narratives invoke, a collaborative call for resistance and action is nevertheless staged.

There are obvious humanistic concerns in such aims for unity, invoking a philosophy that has been antagonistically received within identity politics of recent decades, yet which demands to be reconsidered. In many ways all discourses have sprung from liberal humanism's central aim to improve the mind, propel human advancement, and achieve greater understanding of ourselves and the world around us.[18] In fact, both cyborg cinema and the discourses that have been utilised in response to these films are similarly committed to the same purpose: to expand our existing knowledge, better understand ourselves, and perhaps enable greater control over our destinies.

With this in mind, cyborg cinema's invocation of a humanist philosophy should be positively assessed in terms of what it has to offer. The cyborg film does not deny that there are detrimental aspects of human nature, or dismiss the part science and commerce may play in creating unequal and unhappy social relations. However, perhaps as all art should be, it is aspirational in its vision of what counts as humanity. Most importantly, in a period where virtually every concept is now subject to theoretical cross-examination and dismissal, it conceives and corroborates humanity's potential for intellectual growth and ethical responsibility.

While we must modify our understanding of human subjectivity as being discursively constructed, rather than innate or essential, consequently modifying the traditional concept of humanism accordingly, we cannot afford to abandon the tenets that make us strive to be better people. The cinematic cyborg provides a means of negotiating these issues by showing how even a dehumanised or constructed subject can evince positive human qualities, thereby confirming our own ability to do the same.

In asking what makes us human, posed in terms of what renders us distinct from machines, cyborg cinema has responded with several interpretations, including individuality, emotional capacity and moral (rather than simply logical) reasoning. Through simultaneously forcing us to question what makes us machine-like, the simple answer offered is the negation of these factors, resulting in conformity, callousness and indifference. Cinematic cyborgs veer between both options, reminding us how tenuous human ideals are, and providing a new

means of understanding subjectivity. Just as we are organic creatures, with all the attendant folly, vulnerability and irrationality that comes with being human, we are also comprised of unnatural elements, including not only an increasing reliance on technology, but the extent to which our mode of thinking has been determined, to some degree, by the ideologies that surround us, and which impact upon the way we perceive one another. Humanism may simply be another of these ideologies yet its greatest value lies in the possibility of alliance that such a philosophy maintains, inviting us to reappraise the differences that exist between us, and perhaps even to dismantle some of these divisions.

This is an admittedly simplistic contention, yet it speaks of the need to forge connections if we are to create a mutually beneficial future. To contend, as Landsberg does, that the mere act of going to the cinema is a potentially unifying gesture places a great deal of responsibility on a medium that is designed primarily as entertainment. However, the concept of 'prosthetic memories' is useful nevertheless, for while it may be that the values we hold most dear are no more than agreed upon assumptions about how humans should be defined, that does not mean that they consequently have no worth. Indeed, in attempting to conceptualise humanity as a race of moral beings it must be acknowledged that morality itself has no 'natural' basis, but exists as a code of conduct that has been developed by differing civilisations in order to maintain a degree of order and commonality. Specific values have been promulgated through the centuries to provide some meaning to existence and create a sense of collectivity, being disseminated through religion and, more recently, through media products such as cinema, yet while they may be artificial or 'prosthetic' in the sense that they exist separately to ourselves, this does not lessen their importance, or the level of influence they may have.

Admittedly, there is a danger in claiming that certain films meet specific needs, as Telotte and Landsberg do, and of unduly relying upon such forms in order to fill a specific lack in our lives, for while such a contention makes a refreshing alternative to the notion that media forms are all-powerful and exploitative, both accounts are a vast simplification of how meaning is actually negotiated by audiences. Indeed, if any claim can be made with any certainty regarding cyborg cinema's ultimate significance, it is that all films work on a number of levels and may be interpreted, as this work has proved, in any number of ways.

With this in mind it is perhaps necessary to point out that the cyborg film's appeal is not necessarily determined by the level of sentiment or reassurance they offer, but may be based instead on quite different factors. Indeed, despite the array of academic attention devoted to cyborg cinema, as Peter Ohlin succinctly states: 'the films remain obdurately more interesting and more complex than the theories being developed in response to them'.[19] A key element of the cyborg's appeal, and one that few theorists have picked upon, lies in its ability to surpass convention, to exhibit precisely those superhuman qualities that first led us to imagine such creatures centuries ago. There is an illicit thrill to be had from watching cyborgs supersede normal parameters of human behaviour, particularly when social conventions are rendered inconsequential. This is why the T-800 was

best when he was bad, in the very first *Terminator* film, his singularity of purpose, near invulnerability, and moral impunity allowing audiences to indulge in a primal fantasy in which ordinary rules cease to apply.

The film's director, James Cameron, asserts that any audience affinity with this character is understandable, arguing that:

> There's a little bit of the terminator in everybody. In our private fantasy world we'd all like to be able to walk in and shoot somebody we don't like, or kick a door in instead of unlocking it, to be immune and just to have your own way every minute. The terminator is the ultimate rude person. He operates completely outside all the built-in social constraints. It's a dark, cathartic fantasy. That's why people don't cringe in terror from the terminator but go with him. They want to be him for that one moment.[20]

Sean French describes this desire as 'one of the dark pleasures of film going, in which we respond to vitality rather than morality',[21] and it is particularly interesting that such pleasure is gained by identifying with a figure that is intended to symbolise humanity's worst nightmare. We experience a disloyal thrill at seeing him do whatever he wants, alongside a necessary acknowledgement that such a figure is infinitely better equipped for survival than humans, not only in terms of his effortless ability to assimilate into a human world, but in the sheer physicality of his presence.

Yet such a fantasy cannot be unreservedly indulged, particularly given the fascistic resonances that so many critics have noted, and which some have even attempted to applaud. Jonathan Goldberg argues, for example, that the murders committed by the T-800 are subversively approved by audiences because 'everyone loves to see the police massacred',[22] arguing that other politically fair game include those killed at the Tech-Noir night-club because they apparently represent 'yuppie culture'.[23] However, while this capacity for destruction may be celebrated in the film, it is also punished with the eventual extermination of the terminator – even later, seemingly 'humanised' versions – indicating the extent to which this figure exceeds the boundary for approved cyborgs.

In exploring this division, Samantha Holland perceives the unconscious to be a crucial feature, observing that 'only cyborgs endowed with a "self" by the narrative have dreams or flashbacks . . . None of the Terminators are allowed this kind of "vision". This lack brands them as inhuman, where human-ness is apparently marked by having an unconscious and/or conscious memory.'[24] The distinction is an interesting one and Holland maintains that the unconscious plays 'a central and defining role in the cyborg film, where its presence generally denotes the human-ness of the "self" which is endowed with it'.[25] Another 'pure signifier of human-ness'[26] according to Holland, is the concept of pain, arguing that while Murphy/RoboCop clearly feels pain, those cyborgs who did not derive directly from an existing human, such as Cherry 2000, the Terminators, and *Hardware*'s Mk 13, do not. While this upholds the questionable notion of origins and the notion of an 'innate' capacity perceived therein, it is an idea that cyborg

films have repeatedly alluded to, with the reprogrammed T-800 of *T2* indicating that the ability to 'sense injuries' is not the same as feeling them. Implicitly linked to the capacity to feel pain is an ability to feel emotion, and to experience the sense of empathy that derives from emotion – which is surely necessary to any sense of ethical conduct. This is seemingly the reason why there are limits to the T-800's reformation, because a reprogrammed learning circuit is ultimately not enough to be considered human. As he says to John Connor just prior to his self-elimination, although he finally understands why humans cry, it is something he can never do.

Perhaps it is in acknowledging our own vulnerability in this sense, as much as the folly, irrationality and other features that coincide with being human, that makes cyborghood an inadequate fantasy. As Vivian Sobchack so cogently put it in responding to Baudrillardian technophilia a decade ago, 'it takes a little pain to bring us back to our senses'. A few years later, minus one leg, she has revisited the issue with humour and wisdom, dismissing cyborg subjectivity on the grounds that 'I have not forgotten the limitations and finitude and naked capacities of my flesh, – nor, more importantly, do I desire to escape them. They are, after all, what grounds the concrete gravity and value of my life.'[27] Being 'grounded' is intrinsically linked to the capacity to feel pain in Sobchack's estimation, arguing that only as a material subject 'that has the capacity to bleed and suffer and hurt' are we truly able to find the moral stance that will prove us capable of surviving. As she puts it: 'It is only by embracing life in all its vulnerability and imperfection, by valuing the limitations as well as possibilities of our flesh, and by accepting mortality, that we will get out of this – or any – century alive.'[28]

Nonetheless, SF cinema's interest in posthumanity continues, as is proven by such examples as the *X-Men* and *Matrix* films, suggesting that the popular fascination with superhuman abilities has still not abated, particularly when they are shown to be working for a 'just' cause and can evince demonstrable human emotions. The cyborg Wolverine's love for fellow mutant Jean Grey (Famke Janssen) is intended to prove that beneath the high-tech adamantium there beats a heart of gold, one that off-sets his near physical invulnerability. In utilising such clichés, human values are juxtaposed against the incredible feats such figures are capable of in order to confirm that, to all intents and purposes, they are just like us.

The genre will, no doubt, continue to investigate such fantasies surrounding the augmented body, just as critics will persist in commenting on them, and to advance further speculations on the limits of human identity. The borders and boundaries that strain at our conception of humanity appear to have an enduring interest, even if recourse is so frequently made to recycling familiar tropes in both representing and interpreting this subject.

It is interesting to note that even Manfred Clynes, who first coined the term 'cyborg' to describe a radically modified variant of the species, could not abandon the concept of an essential humanity, stating that: 'the important thing to remember about the cyborg is that as man changes he may no longer have at his disposal the ordinary means of expressing his humanity. So if he is to remain truly human, he must find some substitute means of expressing his humanity.'[29]

The cinematic cyborg could be said to achieve precisely this task – even if what counts as being 'truly human' remains open to debate. Indeed, the cyborg's incoherence seems to be an inherent feature, one that has led Springer to argue that 'the cyborg in popular culture is constituted by paradoxes; its contradictions are its essence and its vision of a discordant future is in fact a projection of our conflictual present'.[30] In other words, the ruptures and inconsistencies that make-up the cyborg reflect the situation we now find ourselves in. Yet this predicament is not without hope, for while theoretical appropriations of the cyborg prove the extent to which our understanding of contemporary identity remains mired in clichés and contradictions, they also provide the opportunity to expose certain ideas to greater scrutiny. Despite numerous claims having been made in recent years suggesting a break with the 'grand narratives' of the past, they obviously continue to wield their influence in contemporary critical analysis, as Marxist, feminist, postcolonial and postmodern appropriations of the cyborg have confirmed, and as this research has accordingly investigated.

As has consequently been demonstrated, such theories offer an inadequate understanding of human subjectivity, yet this does not imply that they are defunct, particularly given their marked influence in the way academic debate is structured, and in which media products are evaluated. Over different periods, some discourses will gain attention and credibility as others dwindle, as is evidenced by the relative negation of economic issues that has occurred in cultural criticism over the last two decades, yet with particular vehicles such as the cyborg the opportunity is presented to re-articulate such concerns – and re-evaluate their relative merits also.

What options exist for progressive politics remains a pressing question. As Cornell West has stated 'the older universalist projects of the Left have been shattered', yet this does not obviate the need for alliances to be fostered, for as he puts it with appropriate urgency:

> there must be strategies and tactics that cut across identity politics, cut across region, and gender, race and class. Class is still around, even though it has been unable to constitute an identity that has the saliency and potency of other identities. And we must attempt to think about how we create and sustain organizations that acknowledge this. Because we are in the bind we are in partly because we have been unable to generate the transgendered, transracial, transsexual orientation of social motion, social momentum, social movement.[31]

The question at stake is how alliances can be formed that cut across these divisions, necessitating a mode of identity and accompanying ideology that might aim to articulate a mutually beneficial strategy for the future. Andrew Ross has cited the need for 'a credible language and imagery to represent the idea of a more radical democratic future; a horizon of expectations for different people to live by and act upon, with some measure and promise of real gratifications'.[32]

Considering ourselves cyborg was a tantalising prospect precisely because it seemed to offer a means of uniting the diverse elements that constitute subjectivity today,

yet although the cyborg has been used by a number of critics it has typically functioned as a means of further entrenching divisions, rather then finding ways of overcoming them. As Kellner suggests, while 'the very instability, flux and uncertainty of the present moment creates openings for more positive futures and possibilities for the creation of a better world out of current nightmares . . . the penchant for micropolitics and/or identity politics fragments the progressive movements and renders many blind to the necessary linkages and interconnections with others'.[33]

The cyborg may have been conceived as a potential means of forging such connections yet has failed to do so, partly because of its semantic open-ness, yet this may also be the most useful thing it could teach us, for in spanning a gamut of different disciplines and adjusting to fit each theoretical explanation of how the world is organised, the cyborg initiates the need for a similarly flexible understanding of contemporary social relations, one that is equally capable of adopting numerous positions and acknowledging the multiplicity of experiences that inform existence in the twenty-first century.

Kellner suggests that a 'multiperspectival' approach may be the solution to present theoretical dissension, arguing that 'combining Marxist, feminist, structuralist, post structuralist, psychoanalytic and other critical perspectives will provide fuller, more complete and stronger readings'.[34] Combining such diverse standpoints is not as easy as it might appear, particularly when the governing theoretical tendency is to invest in a specific theory and stick to it at all cost, yet it is not simply 'stronger readings' that we need, but a more accurate appraisal of who we are.

The point is to discern how identification, orientation, and potential coalition can be achieved, which involves acknowledging the multi-faceted nature of subjectivity itself, rather than attempting to preserve 'either/or' distinctions, because jobs, genders, family backgrounds, nationalities, political affiliations, and other aspects of our lives each inform who we are and how we relate to the world. They may conflict with one another at times, and take differing levels of priority, yet this is the nature of multiple subjectivity and it is erroneous to assume that we read texts – or inhabit the world – by aligning ourselves to one specific polarity.

Some have argued that a new term for subjectivity will somehow provide a positive way forward. For example, N. Katherine Hayles celebrates the posthuman as a privileging of information and consciousness over physicality, indicating that hers is very much an intellectual endeavour.[35] Considering the term 'human' to be ideologically tainted and 'deeply entwined with projects of domination and oppression',[36] her perceived solution is to erase markers of bodily difference through a new conceptual term, that of the 'posthuman'. Yet clearly such a strategy is an evasion of material conditions, and the physicality of actual experience, just as her hostility to the term 'human' seems more than a little irrational. Indeed, given the difficulties noted in establishing mutual territory, even with an imaginary new concept such as the cyborg or posthuman, we might ask with some justification whether we have more to gain from acknowledging instead the fundamental elements that make us human.

This is an admittedly idealistic endeavour, particularly among those who would contend that certain divisions between people will always create antagonisms, yet to abandon such an ideal seems manifestly unhelpful also. Inevitably, the events that have been popularly condensed into the term '9/11' might cause us to re-think many issues regarding identity, particularly the human capacity to overcome our differences to one another, yet the continuing ramifications resulting from those events and other hostilities around the world should also underscore the urgency with which change is required. The cyborg metaphor may have proved inadequate to the task of bridging existing divides, yet some source of hope can nevertheless be found in this figure, particularly in terms of its multivalency – the semantic flexibility with which it has adopted such a variety of subject positions, and which might enable the understanding that is so necessary today. Perhaps what we have most to learn from the cyborg is that, rather than seek to establish fundamental differences, we must endeavour instead to know more about each other and seek to understand what we have in common. As Cornell West argues 'the time has come for critics and artists of the new cultural politics of difference to cast their nets widely, flex their muscles broadly, and thereby refuse to limit their visions, analyses and praxis to particular terrains'.[37] Indeed, this call should be extended, beyond critics and artists, to us all, for as Amin Maalouf has stated 'each of us should be encouraged to accept his own diversity, to see his identity as the sum of all his various affiliations . . . and everyone should be able to include in what he regards as his own identity a new ingredient: the sense of belonging to the human adventure as well as his own'.[38]

The human adventure, and where it is likely to take us in the twenty-first century, is one of the most pressing questions of our time, one that lies at the heart of speculative fiction, and it remains notable that while diverse theories have produced an increasingly conflicted vision of human identity, cyborg cinema has remained convinced of its integrity. Yet for all its championing of humans, cyborg cinema also celebrates the very technologies that are questioned in its narratives, which are crucially entwined with humanity's continued existence, thereby seeming to infer that we must come to terms with the changes wrought by modern society and accept the inevitability of transition. In emulating human values every 'good' cyborg battles for humanity's survival, and in routinely thwarting 'bad' versions they additionally confirm our ability to harness technology's potential for the better. Yet such narrative tendencies fail to avoid the dystopian future that is predicted in such films, and have become ever more familiar.

Indeed, in moving from the margins to the mainstream of popular culture, the cyborg became incorporated within ever more predictable storylines, and, once domesticated, has arguably ceased to challenge or provoke, with postmodern parody detracting from its originality as much as the inevitable processes of commercialism. However, what happened to the cinematic cyborg is a journey that many such cycles undergo and which may not therefore imply its irrevocable disappearance. In fact, the reverse seems to be the case. *Terminator 3* signals the continuation of the *Terminator* franchise and rumours abound regarding new cyborg ventures, all of which suggests the production of a new cycle of cyborg

films. Yet *T3* also proves how formulaic this figure has become, and in featuring a malevolent female cyborg that simply reworks the same trope investigated in Chapter 4, in which transgressive female cyborgs are punished through death, it also suggests an inability to revise established ideas. The fact that Skynet's evolution and eventual planetary take-over are shown to be inevitable also undoes the reassuring ideological work of *Terminator 2*, suggesting that the 'good cyborg' had nowhere left to go, while also severely undermining humanity's ability to achieve any sense of change.

As an anthropomorphised symbol of our own divided response to technology, as much as the dual disposition of human nature itself, the cyborg was always bound to ricochet between good and bad incarnations, yet how such images impact upon our view of the future is another matter. Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor have argued that 'there is no choice between utopia and dystopia, Good Terminator and Evil Terminator – they are both here',[39] yet while both options may be present the contention that there is 'no choice' between them seems to invite mere apathy. While technology has an equal capacity to benefit humanity as much as threaten it, its applications and likely consequences will only be determined through continued monitoring and, ultimately, through decision-making. Clearly, we cannot consign ourselves to polarities on this matter, for as Jennifer Terry and Melodie Calvert have asserted, 'there is no simple way to say no to technology and be a citizen these days'.[40] Indeed, it is because technology has an inevitable place in our lives that we must fully engage with all its potential implications, and exercise choices where we can.

That is not to say that the choices available to us are unlimited however. In fact, confirming that theorists are as open to contradiction as the cyborg, Chris Hables Gray has proved to be dangerously naïve in assuming this is the case, arguing that 'accepting ourselves as cyborgs can be liberating and empowering' on the grounds that, through such acceptance 'we can choose how we construct ourselves'.[41] Negating, like so many other critics in the field, that economic disparity makes a real difference in the uses we make of technologies, and ignoring the differing ways in which they impact upon our lives, Gray simplistically asserts that 'our very subjectivity can be constructed in large part by the choices we make about our own cyborgization'.[42] He only notes as an aside towards the end of his book, *Cyborg Citizen*, that 'cyborgization can lead to a loss of freedom',[43] yet largely ignores the implications of this belated acknowledgement, thus rendering his purported 'cyborg bill of rights' to be as apolitical as Haraway's 'manifesto' – incapable of truly commenting on what cyborg status implies beyond a strictly utopian and imaginative sense.

To be a cyborg, however, can mean a quite different range of experiences, not necessarily chosen, and far from simply determined. Calcutt contends that 'successive technologies have, at different instances, become the screen upon which humanity's doubts about itself are projected'[44] and the cyborg would seem to fit this criteria well, conveying uncertainty about our uniqueness, while also rendering this very question seemingly irrelevant. Bukatman describes fictional speculations surrounding posthumans as a strategy of accommodation, arguing

that, 'faced with the possibility of its own extinction, or at least its new irrelevance, the human subject has produced a range of representations of itself as melded with the matrices of terminal existence'.[45] Far from being subsumed by terminal existence however, humanity takes up 'a position of mastery, so that by entering the machine, the machine becomes a part of the human'.[46] This strategy works to redeem and reclaim the cyborg as intrinsically human, thereby dispelling fears about any potential changes wrought by new technologies. It consequently performs a function that Bukatman asserts is innate to the medium of film, arguing that, because it utilises high-tech innovations such as computer-aided design, 'cinema already constructs a space of accommodation to unfamiliar technologies'.[47]

Cyborg cinema is thus interpreted as an attempt to limit the threat of future shock, yet radical elements remain, not only in the shades of polemic outlined previously, but in its philosophical implications also. Identifying with others without resorting to essentialism is the quandary we now face, one that Spivak has sought to overcome through her notion of strategic essentialism,[48] or what Haraway terms as 'elective affinities', and such a strategy would seem to be a necessary endeavour if any degree of commonality is to be found. Fictional cyborgs show how this can be achieved not only in upholding a specific notion of humanity, but via the alliances formed, what Landsberg terms as 'a practice of empathy'.[49] Hence, Quaid enables the extension of rights to the Martian colonists he had previously helped to subdue, while a similar moral sense prevents Murphy and Deckard from simply being tools of an oppressive state. Although other motives are discernible in their actions, traces of an emergent social conscience are shown, and in sacrificing positions of relative privilege in order to defend the rights of others, they remain inspirational.

That next to no equivalent actions are demonstrated by female cyborgs is, of course, regrettable, proving that who is chosen to represent a symbolic humanity is clearly limited in such films. Nevertheless, some exceptions remain, with *Alien: Resurrection*'s Call functioning as the film's sole representative of altruism, and proving that the cycle is still capable of a few surprises. The heightened degree of ruthlessness exhibited by both humans and aliens in the film renders Call's humanistic ideals deeply anachronistic, yet they are also deeply reassuring in confirming that our most cherished beliefs may survive within technological products, thereby ensuring humanity's survival.

Of course, any glance at the news will confirm that humans fall far short of such ideals, and fictional narratives confirming an intrinsic 'goodness' are unlikely to convince us otherwise, but ideals remain crucial nevertheless and in a world torn apart by bitter hostilities any semblance of hope is equally crucial. Our understanding of humanity – represented via cyborg cinema – may therefore be as constructed as the discourses evaluated here, 'prosthetic' in Landsberg's terms, but any faith in progress remains appealing nonetheless. While good and bad cyborgs are both equally valid in terms of the contrasting traits they embody, there *are* choices open to us both as individuals and as a potential collectivity, and it is recognising this that will be essential if we are to stand any hope, as Sobchack argues, of getting out of this century alive.

Interestingly, despite numerous reassurances about the preservation of specific ideals, and thus of humanity itself, the dystopian tendencies of cyborg cinema prevail, fulfilling the worst case scenario that we simply will not make it as a species. Nonetheless, by way of compensation, such narratives affirm that our legacy may be continued in our creations. This dream is as old as humanity itself, propelled by an awareness that existence is finite and that human nature is far from perfect, and complemented by a newfound faith in technology's ability to survive beyond us. It is the reason we make cyborgs in the first place, and one of cinema's primary functions also – enabling us to work through the desires and dread born from living in uncertain times, and perhaps even serving as the final repository of human values.

AI: Artificial Intelligence (Spielberg, 2001) plays upon this very idea. Adapted from an original short story by Brian Aldiss entitled, 'Supertoys Last All Summer Long'[50] the film explores the possibility of creating 'emotional' machines, suggesting that once a technological form evolves to the degree where it is sentient and, above all, able to love, it can no longer be differentiated from the human, and may even surpass humanity. Created as a mass-produced experiment, David (Haley Joel Osment), is an artificial child who is rejected by both his human mother and a technophobic society, yet who magically survives beyond the human race when global warming floods the planet, serving as an archive of our most sentimental values.

An advanced race of super robots, looking uncannily like the extraterrestrials of Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), inform David that he is 'the sole legacy of the human race, proof of their genius'. According to the film's producer, Kathleen Kennedy, 'they are the apotheosis of artificial intelligence, the point of perfection of robots. They've created themselves and continued to procreate because mankind is gone from the face of the planet.'[51] Yet despite effectively superseding humans, these robots are driven by an attempt to understand who we were and probe David's mind to uncover some knowledge of humans. In doing so they are not met with the various levels of human prejudice he has encountered, but are supplied instead with cherished, if patently idealised, memories of a loving and devoted mother, a myth of familial devotion.

Functioning as a repository of human values, David may thus serve as a metaphor of cyborg cinema itself, implicitly maintaining the worth of certain beliefs – no matter how erroneous. Providing a level of wish-fulfilment in its denouement that is as sentimental as it is disturbing, the super robots temporarily reproduce David's mother from a strand of her DNA as a reward for his help. If there are questionable ethical issues involved in creating a child substitute who will love unconditionally and survive indefinitely, this is further exacerbated by creating a facsimile of a person, without prior consent, who is destined to live only for one day.[52] Yet it is equally notable that the resulting figure is infinitely more loving than the original, having been created in the image David has of her, just as the perfect day he has with her conveniently airbrushes David's rival human brother and suspicious father out of the family portrait.

A child's devotion is thus rewarded by a mother who is finally free to love him without any rivals for her affection, or prejudices in terms of what he is made of, and although no greater understanding is offered about the nature of human identity than it was at the beginning of the film, providing only a series of cinematic clichés, the same attempt at reassurance encountered in previous cyborg narratives is again in evidence, with humanity preserved, even beyond the human race.

An interesting contrast can be found in *Screamers* (Christian Duguay, 1995). Adapted from a Philip K. Dick story entitled 'Second Variety' (1953), the narrative focuses on a prominent theme in Dick's fiction, that of technologies evolving to the extent that they obscure the distinction between human and machine. Set on a planet beleaguered by years of civil war, the 'screamers' of the title are mechanical weapons used to attack enemy outposts, yet which begin to see all humans as a threat. Ever more insidious guises are adopted by successive models as a means of infiltrating among humans, including 'David' (Michael Caioz) who looks like an abandoned child holding his teddy bear yet who is shown to be another weapon, one that detonates upon close enough proximity to humans. By exploiting human emotions, such as the desire to protect a small child, the film plays on the very sentiments that cyborg cinema as a whole fosters. The familiar Dickian cynicism suggested by the tale is that humanity's greatest attribute, our ability to empathise with others, will be what machines will exploit – just as it is the factor such films appear to capitalise on.

However, the film also chooses to uphold Dick's contrary yet equally insistent hope that machines may evolve to emulate human values, and new cyborg 'type' Jessica (Jennifer Rubin) fulfils this sentiment by developing a conscience, acting as a moral agent, and even affirming before her 'death' that she has learnt how to love. While *Screamers* questions whether humanity's empathy is a potential weakness, with all 'types' espousing the virtues of being alone and unfettered by such needs, it also upholds this characteristic as what truly defines us as human. It thus conforms to the premise, reiterated in countless cyborg scenarios, that there is an intrinsic quality that we all share, and which has the capacity to transform us into true examples of humanity.

If this contention is but another cinematic cliché, created in order to provide a sense of certainty to existence, then it is common to virtually all the cyborg films discussed, all of which reiterate similar ideas regarding love, family, and sacrifice, possibly because they offer a sense of stability in our processes of cognition.[53] Throughout cyborg narratives the same clichés abound. Augmented humans, from *Blade Runner*'s replicants to the cyberpunk protagonists of *The Matrix*, are shown to be in danger of losing an integral component of humanity, yet are redeemed by love, while others aspiring towards human status frequently sacrifice themselves as proof that they are no threat to the supremacy of humans. In this way a vital sense of reassurance is provided, one that negates the consequences of change by preserving an idea of continuity.

I suggested in Chapter 3 that such sentiment is a means of sublimating anxieties in the lack of any clear political strategy, yet such films also mark a persistent and

enduring belief that a coherent understanding of humanity might be yielded, and towards which we might each aspire. While the political content of cyborg texts has become increasingly diluted, even negated entirely in films such as the *Matrix* trilogy, these films assert that specific experiences can be claimed as key markers of 'humanity' – thereby affirming both a sense of commonality and faith in human virtues that are all too rare today.

As I hope has become evident from this book, the cyborg justifies the array of theories and issues associated with it, serving as a rich metaphor of contemporary concerns. As to whether the cyborg can offer a genuinely new mode of orientation, and perhaps even unification, the available evidence would suggest that it can offer little more than the opportunity to reassess the foundations of contemporary discourse, highlighting the extent to which differing interpretations of identity are equally conflict-laden and contradictory, and revealing the degree to which forging connections with others has become fraught with difficulty.

Although re-evaluating ourselves as cyborg offers a relatively broad category with which a number of different groups might identify, as we have seen, attempts to do so have simply worked to perpetuate existing divisions, confirming the fact that we have more to gain from recognising our common humanity – as corny and cliché-ridden and contestable as this might seem – than from seeking any new definitions.

However, while the cyborg's intrinsic ambiguity may reduce its potential as a progressive icon, it remains a compelling product of our cultural imagination, one that is constructed anew by all who wish to claim a stake in it; intriguing audiences, provoking fear and fascination in equal part, and asking fundamental questions, like the automata of past centuries, about how we should define ourselves.

Such questions were never more appropriate than now and as developments in robotics and related technologies advance the distinction between humans and machines will doubtless become more pressing. That expectation has far exceeded the level of progress in the field indicates the relative complexity not only of human physiology, but of human thought processes also – factors which appear to have been severely underestimated by those claiming we are about to be superseded.

Nevertheless, images of posthumanity continue to be speculated upon and Hans Moravec, who has maintained that consciousness will one day be 'uploadable' into computer systems, has additionally claimed that by 2030 computers will be as complex as the human nervous system. Kevin Warwick foresees robot intelligence outpacing humans in the space of a generation, while Rod Brooks has asserted that robots will eventually be indistinguishable from humans.[54] Each of these scientists is working towards making their predictions a reality, yet despite such claims – and they are admittedly easier to make than to prove – the real question begged is what level of responsibility we would have towards a life-form of equal complexity to ourselves, and, by extension, what ramifications will their existence have upon our current definitions of humanity?

The cyborg's continuing significance is validated by its questioning of such issues, together with asking how we ourselves might become reshaped by technology.

Because the development of new technologies are innately commerce driven, any intellectual, material or physiological benefits they offer will depend on having the appropriate means available. Already vast discrepancies exist between people in terms of access to resources. As technology affects new standards of healthcare, such discrepancies are likely to widen still further, to the extent that being 'cyborged' – in the sense that Gray implies the term – could well mean the difference between life and death. In an uncertain future it remains all too evident that continuing economic disparity will leave people with even more profoundly different life chances than they have at present. For all the democratic claims made for technologies such as Virtual Reality and the Internet, the life we live in the real world will still be a matter of what we can afford, a fact that renders the implications of cyborg status increasingly important.

Whatever the future of robotics may hold, and however science fictional our lives may become, SF cinema's ability to comment on such changes remains its most compelling attraction. The genre is at present in a fairly lamentable position, dominated by blockbuster franchises and seemingly pointless remakes of classics such as *Rollerball*, *Westworld*, *Planet of the Apes* and *The Time Machine* – thereby supporting Sobchack's claim that SF films made after 1977 have been governed by an over-riding sense of nostalgia in their recycling of themes and conventions.[55] Barry K. Grant regards the re-make as investing new cultural values into the genre,[56] yet it is hard to discern what new values these films might comment on, other than a patent inability to conceive of new ideas.

Cyborg cinema has not been immune to such tendencies, including a marked sense of nostalgia and repetition, yet the cycle's ability to survive for so long is also testimony to its ability to adapt, the diversity of its appeal, and the continuing topicality of its concerns. The main narrative question discernible in its narratives asks whether human identity can survive unscathed in the face of increasingly sophisticated simulations, drawing the overwhelming conclusion that we have no reason to be alarmed, because a humanistic logic prevails. This may not be accurate, it may not include all the permutations of being human that exist today, but it ultimately works to reassure us that while we preserve specific ideals, we maintain our humanity. A sense of continuity is thus ensured, between the past, present and future, and while not politically prescriptive in helping us form alliances with one another, on a basic level this is precisely its intention.

By contrast, theoretical discourses have proven to be too prone to ruptures and inconsistencies to offer anything more than partial truths in terms of how we make sense of humanity, necessitating that we continue to construct our notions of both self and society from both the available means at our disposal and those as yet unimagined, fostering hope where we can.

The cyborg may have proved useful in this task, but seems too familiar, and too loaded with the ideological baggage placed upon it, to survive as the perplexing and provocative figure it once was. Nevertheless, it is tempting to hope that it will remain on our screens and endure as a means of both entertainment and introspection. Given the taste for revising icons of the past the cyborg's ability to retain its place in popular consciousness seems assured, even fitting for a figure that could be

epitomised by its ability to adapt and survive. Like the classic monster of horror, it seems destined for perpetual renewal, reappearing just when we least expect it to, with the potential to adopt any number of guises. Where the cyborg can go from here continues to be a fascinating possibility. Whether it still has any surprises (for either audiences or critics) remains to be seen.

Notes

Introduction

1. The context for this warning was that of law and order, with Blair deriding the need for citizens to barricade themselves into their homes as a measure against crime, just as Tyrell lives in seclusion from the masses. However, the reference has additional implications in warning against creating such an intensely polarised class system as is found in *Blade Runner*.
2. As professor of cybernetics at Reading University, Warwick has used his own body as the basis of his research. In 2001, he had a silicone chip implanted in his left arm and that of his wife, Irena, with a power source, tuner, and radio receiver surgically connected to nerves in the couple's arms, enabling Warwick to send signals to his wife. Such experimentation was said to potentially help people with spinal chord damage, yet Warwick's high media profile might be seen to serve less altruistic motives.
3. Marie O'Mahony, *Cyborg: The Man-Machine* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), p. 3.
4. Although man-machine hybrids have appeared throughout history in myth and literature, the term 'cyborg' is relatively new, devised by Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline for a Space Flight Symposium sponsored by the US Air Force School of Aviation Medicine. For further information on the contents of this paper, 'Cyborgs and Space', accompanied by an interview with Manfred Clynes, see *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 29–53.
5. Stelarc, 'From Psycho-Body to Cyber Systems: Images as Posthuman Entities', *Virtual Futures: Cybererotics, Technology and Post-Human Pragmatism*, ed. Joan Broadhurst Dixon and Eric J. Cassidy (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 116.
6. Erik Davis, *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (London: Serpents Tail, 1999), p. 10.
7. Chris Hables Gray, *Cyborg Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.
8. Hables Gray, *Cyborg Citizen*, pp. 2–3.
9. Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 24.
10. Donna Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s', originally published in *Socialist Review*, no. 80 (1985) reprinted in *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Weed (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 174.
11. Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 156.
12. The correlation between Springer and Dery in this context is perhaps explained by the fact that they acknowledge one another's influence in their respective books, yet Dery articulates the explicitly fascistic claims in more detail in his work, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), pp. 266–7.
13. There is some confusion in the *Terminator* films regarding the serial codes and models used to describe Schwarzenegger's character. He is referred to in both *Terminator* and *Terminator 2* as 'Cyberdyne Systems Model 101' yet many critics have termed him as a 'T-800' in reference to the endoskeleton his flesh is built around. The confusion is merely intensified by *Terminator 3* because he is explicitly referred to in the film as a 'T-101', while writers of the third instalment have additionally referred to him in interviews as a T-850 model because his endoskeleton has been upgraded to store hydrogen fuel cells! The 'Major Candy' sequence deleted from the film and included on the DVD

version of *T3* explains the new use of 'T-101' by the fact that a new company is responsible for his design, and have consequently re-named him, yet the anomalies are all too evident and come across as a continuity error – of which there are many in *T3*. In order to avoid any further confusion, and in an effort to retain consistency, I retain T-800 throughout as T-101 makes no sense for an upgraded cyborg when the earlier 600-series mentioned by Kyle Reece in the first *Terminator* film was a clear predecessor.

14. See for example, Susan Jeffords, who concurs with Haraway in viewing signs of masculine sensitivity as both a marker and a denial of 'the privileges associated with white US masculinities', 'The Big Switch: Hollywood Masculinity in the Nineties', *Film Theory Hoes to the Movies*, ed. Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 207.
15. Mary Anne Doane's 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen*, vol. 23 (Sept./Oct. 1982) – can be linked to Joan Riviere's 'Womanliness as a Masquerade', *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Donald J. Burgin and C. Kaplan (London: Methuen, 1986) as well as Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and will be further explored in Chapter 4.
16. J.P. Telotte, *Replications: A Robotic History of the Science Fiction Film* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), p. 5.
17. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 7.
18. Scott Bukatman, *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 6.
19. See *Alien Zone* for a reprint of Bruno's article, pp. 183–95.
20. See Julie F. Codell and Doran Larson, both of whom are referenced in Chapter 3.
21. See Robert Barringer, referred to in Chapter 3, and both Rhonda Wilcox and Daniel Bernardi, who are further discussed in Chapter 5.
22. John Hartley, *A Short History of Cultural Studies* (London: Sage, 2003), p. 56.
23. Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture*, p. 24.
24. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 177.
25. Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (originally published in 1968, reprinted by Granada Publishing, 1977), p. 43.
26. Heather L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 16.
27. Per Schelde, *Androids, Humanoids and Other Science Fiction Monsters* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 242–4.

1 Cycles, sub-genres and cyborg cinema

1. Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Film Making and the Studio System* (New York: Random House, 1981), p. vii.
2. Schatz's model is effectively summarised in the introduction to *Deny All Knowledge: Reading the X Files*, ed. David Lavery, Angela Hague and Marla Cartwright (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), p. 18. For Schatz's own summary of cyclical development see *Hollywood Genres*, pp. 37–8.
3. Schatz, 'The Structural Influence: New Directions in Film Genre Study', *Film Genre Reader II*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. 99.
4. Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 9.
5. Alan Williams, 'Is a Radical Genre Criticism Possible?', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Spring 1984), p. 121.
6. Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 38.
7. Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: BFI Press, 1999), p. 59.
8. Ibid., p. 60.
9. Ibid., p. 140.
10. Jim Collins, 'Genericity in the Nineties: Eclectic Irony and the New Sincerity', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, ed. Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 250.

11. Altman, *Film/Genre*, p. 21.
12. Ibid., p. 62.
13. Robin Wood, 'Ideology, Genre, Auteur', *Film Genre Reader II*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. 62.
14. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 15.
15. Alan Williams, 'Is a Radical Genre Criticism Possible?', p. 124.
16. Thomas Schatz, 'The Structural Influence: New Directions in Film Genre Study', *Film Genre Reader II*, p. 97.
17. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 35.
18. Judith Hess Wright, 'Genre Films and the Status Quo', *Film Genre Reader II*, p. 41.
19. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 265.
20. Schatz, 'The New Hollywood', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, p. 9.
21. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 38.
22. Steven Keane, Review of *Universal Soldier, City Limits*, 23/7/1992, p. 25.
23. J. Hoberman, 'Terminal Systems', *Village Voice*, 9 July 1991, p. 56, quoted by Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz, *Projecting the Shadow: The Cyborg Hero in American Film* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 192.
24. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 38.
25. Rushing and Frentz, *Projecting the Shadow*, p. 183.
26. Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), p. 143.
27. John Clute, *Science Fiction: The Illustrated Encyclopedia* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1995), p. 293.
28. See Mark Crispin Miller's article of the same name in his book *Boxed in: The Culture of TV* (Chicago: Evanston Northwestern University Press), 1988.
29. Ibid., p. 302.
30. At the time of writing, 9 of the top 20 highest grossing films of all time were in the SF category, including all the *Star Wars* films, *ET*, *Spiderman*, *Jurassic Park* and *Independence Day*, while recent releases such as *The Matrix: Reloaded*, *X-2* and *Armageddon* also feature prominently. Source: The Movie Times.Com web-site, which holds useful information on box-office records.
31. Steve Neale, 'Questions of Genre', *Film Genre Reader II*, p. 174.
32. David Sanjek, 'Same as it ever was: Innovation and Exhaustion in the Horror and Science Fiction Films of the 1990s', *Film Genre 2000: New Critical Essays*, ed. Wheeler Winston Dixon (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 113.
33. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 40.
34. Sanjek, 'Same as It Ever Was', p. 114.
35. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 266.
36. Schatz, 'The New Hollywood', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, p. 8.
37. See for example, *Movie Blockbusters*, ed. Julian Stringer (London: Routledge, 2003); and Geoff King, *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster* (London: IB Tauris, 2000).
38. The title of Schatz's new book, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Film Making in the Studio Era* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), ably comments on this level of admiration.
39. See Vivian Sobchack's final chapter in *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film* (New York: Ungar, 1993).
40. As quoted by Manfred Nagl in 'The Science Fiction Film in Historical Perspective', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 10 (1983), p. 272.
41. For further discussion of this term see Gary K. Wolfe's *The Known and the Unknown: The Iconography of Science Fiction* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1979), pp. 23–7.
42. Claudia Springer, 'Psycho-Cybernetics', *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Annette Kuhn (London: Verso, 1999), p. 206.
43. Geoff King, *Spectacular Narratives*, p. 191.
44. Ibid., p. 191.

45. Paul Smith, 'Terminator Technology: Hollywood, History and Technology', *Keyframes: Popular Cinema and Cultural Studies*, ed. Matthew Tinkcom and Amy Villarejo (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 338–9.
46. Smith, 'Terminator Technology', p. 342.
47. Wheeler Winston Dixon, Introduction to *Film Genre 2000*, p. 8.
48. For a clearer understanding of her distinction see Constance Penley's 'Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia', *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Annette Kuhn (London: Verso, 1990).
49. Graeme Turner, *Film as Social Practice*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 86, 88.
50. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 262.

2 Body and soul: A history of cyborg theory

1. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 175.
2. Patricia Warrick provides a useful summary of proto SF influences in ancient Greek mythology in her book *The Cybernetic Imagination* (Cambridge: Massachussetts Press, 1980). References to cyborg-related legends such as the Golem, as well as to actual automata, can be found in Bruce Mazlish's *The Fourth Discontinuity: The Co-Evolution of Humans and Machines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). See also Harry M. Geduld's chapter 'Genesis II: The Evolution of Synthetic Man', *Robots, Robots, Robots*, ed. Harry M. Geduld and Ronald Goltesman (Boston: NY Graphic Society, 1978), which also provides an excellent survey of real-life automata appearing throughout history; while the first chapter of *Reinventing Man: The Robot Becomes Reality*, ed. Igor Aleksander and Piers Burnett (London: Kogan Page, 1983) provides the robot with an ancestry going back to antiquity.
3. William Gibson in interview with Larry McCaffery in *Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Fiction*, ed. Larry McCaffery (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 270.
4. Timo Siivonen, 'Cyborgs and Generic Oxymorons: The Body and Technology in William Gibson's Cyberspace Trilogy', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 23, no. 69 (1996), p. 241.
5. Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 161.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. Veronica Hollinger, 'The Technobody and it Discontents', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 24 (1997), pp. 126–7.
8. Geoff Simons, *Robots: The Quest for Living Machines* (London: Cassell, 1994), pp. 45–50.
9. Bruce Mazlish asserts that a chief trait that differentiates humans from machines is the ability to create artificial beings through technology. The questioning of our essence that such 'beings' may inspire is also considered by him to be unique. *The Fourth Discontinuity*, pp. 206–9.
10. Cited by Robert D. Romanyshyn, *Technology as Symptom and Dream*, p. 140.
11. Cited by Mazlish, *The Fourth Discontinuity*, pp. 23–4.
12. Ibid., p. 28.
13. Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 38.
14. Franco Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*, trans. Susan Fischer (London: Verso, 1983), p. 86, cited by Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, p. 30.
15. Debbie Shaw argues that Shelley's monster was a metaphor of the nineteenth-century woman writer, who she claims was deemed monstrous in her time in her article 'In her Own Image: The Constructed Female in Women's Science Fiction', *Science as Culture*, vol. 3, no. 15, pt. 2 (1992), p. 274. See also Mary A. Favret's article 'A Woman Writes the Fiction of Science: The Body in *Frankenstein*', *Genders*, no. 14 (1992), pp. 50–65.
16. Professor Von Jurgen's *Bodyworlds* exhibition has created the same controversy today as the 'resurrectionists' of the nineteenth century, using real corpses in his displays – supposedly

in the interests of advancing human knowledge about what we are made of, and resulting in the same mixture of clinical fascination (having made millions from the sale of his plastinated body parts to hospitals around the world) and moral repugnance.

17. Romanyshyn, p. 140.
18. Ibid., p. 17.
19. Stelarc, 'From Psycho-Body to Cyber Systems: Images as Posthuman Entities', *Virtual Futures: Cybererotics, Technology and Post-Human Pragmatism*, ed. Joan Broadhurst Dixon and Eric J. Cassidy (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 117.
20. Linda Schiebinger, 'Taxonomy for Human Beings', *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, ed. Gill Kirkup, Linda Janes, Kathryn Woodward and Fiona Hovenden (London: Routledge, 1999).
21. Mazlish, p. 113.
22. T.H. Huxley, quoted by James Paradis in *T.H. Huxley: Man's Place in Nature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 136.
23. Pavlov, quoted by B.P. Babkin, *Pavlov: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 65 – as cited in *The Fourth Discontinuity*, p. 124.
24. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 140.
25. Dery, *Escape Velocity*, p. 232.
26. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 7.
27. Donna Haraway alludes to these experiments, conducted at Rockland State Hospital in New York, in her article 'Cyborgs and Symbionts: Living Together in the New World Order', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. xvi and they also form the background of Marge Piercy's novel *Woman on the Edge of Time*.
28. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 20.
29. As summarised by Dery in *Escape Velocity*, pp. 299–301.
30. David M. Rorvik, *As Man Becomes Machine: The Evolution of the Cyborg* (London: Sphere Books, 1979), p. 15.
31. Mazlish, *The Fourth Discontinuity*, p. 8.
32. Clynes, as explained to Rorvik in *As Man Becomes Machine*, pp. 133–5.
33. Clynes in interview with Chris Hables Gray, *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 53.
34. Published in *Processed Lives: Gender and Technology in Everyday Life*, ed. Jennifer Terry and Melodie Calvert (London: Routledge, 1997).
35. For an explanation of this incident, see Chris Hables Gray's *Cyborg Citizen* (pp. 136–7) and for a broader account of its circumstances and implications, see Julian Dibbell's *My Tiny Life: Crime and Passion in a Virtual World* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999).
36. Allucquere Roseanne Stone 'Will the Real Body Please Stand Up?', *Cybersexualities*, ed. Jenny Wolmark (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 91.
37. Ibid., p. 94.
38. Increased musculature through weight training could also be added to this category of potential cyborgs as it is another example of the physically altered body achieved through interaction with machines. Anne Balsamo includes a discussion of female body builders in her study, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*.
39. N. Katherine Hayles 'The Life Cycle of Cyborgs: Writing the Posthuman', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 322.
40. Sean French, *The Terminator* (BFI Modern Classics series, London: BFI Publishing, 1996), p. 39.
41. Alison Adam, *Artificial Knowing: Gender and the Thinking Machine* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 28.
42. Claudia Springer, *Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Post-Industrial Age* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), p. 17.
43. Pam Rosenthal, 'Jacked In: Fordism, Cyberpunk, Marxism', *Socialist Review*, vol. 21, pt. 1 (1991), pp. 79–103.
44. Ibid., pp. 99–100.
45. Ibid., p. 100.

46. Eric J. Cassidy, Preface to *Virtual Futures*, p. ix.
47. See Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (London: The Women's Press, 1979).
48. Patronico Schweickart, 'What If: Science and Technology in Feminist Utopia', *Machina Ex Dea*, ed. Jean Rotschild (New York: Pergamon, 1983), p. 201.
49. Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body*, p. 31.
50. Judith Halberstam, 'Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Fall 1991), p. 446.
51. Gonzalez, 'Envisioning Cyborg Bodies', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 275.
52. Ibid., p. 277.
53. Ibid., p. 278.
54. Chela Sandoval, 'New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 407.
55. Sandoval, 'New Sciences', p. 408.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 409.
58. Ibid.
59. Sandoval, p. 419.
60. Mazlish, *The Fourth Discontinuity*, p. 7.
61. Forest Pyle, 'Making Cyborgs, Making Humans: Of Terminators and Blade Runners', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, ed. Jim Collins *et al*. (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 241.
62. Pyle, 'Making Cyborgs, Making Humans', p. 228.
63. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 31.
64. Stone, 'Will the Real Body Please Stand Up?', p. 94.
65. Ibid.
66. David Burner, *Making Peace with the 60s* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 223.
67. Telotte, *Replications*, pp. 23–4.
68. Gray, Mentor and Figueroa-Sarriera, 'Cyborgology', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 7.
69. Thomas Foster, 'Meat Puppets or Robopaths? Cyberpunk and the Question of Embodiment', *Cybersexualities*, p. 212.
70. Ibid., p. 213.
71. Gonzalez, 'Envisioning Cyborg Bodies', p. 268.
72. Ibid., p. 269.
73. Ibid., p. 268.
74. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 4.

3 Food for Moloch: The cyborg as worker

1. Sandoval, 'New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed', *The Cyborg Handbook*, pp. 407–21.
2. Sally R. Munt, Introduction to *Cultural Studies and the Working Class*, ed. Sally R. Munt (London: Cassell, 2000), p. 6.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 10.
5. Mazlish, *The Fourth Discontinuity*, p. 65.
6. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Phoenix: Orion, 1996) (reproduced from the original translation of 1888), p. 14.
7. Karel Capek, explaining the play's meaning in *The Saturday Review*, 1923, reprinted in *Karel Capek*, William E. Harkins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 91.
8. Mazlish, *The Fourth Discontinuity*, p. 53.
9. Warrick, *The Cybernetic Imagination*, p. 49.
10. Sam Moskowitz, *Explorers of the Infinite: Shapes of Science Fiction* (Cleveland: Ohio, 1963), pp. 223–4.

11. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 54.
12. Roger Dadoun, 'Mother-City-Mittler Hitler', *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism and Science Fiction*, ed. Constance Penley, Elizabeth Lyon, Lynne Spigel and Janet Bergstrom (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 136.
13. Ibid.
14. See Chapter 2 of Telotte's *Replications: A Robotic History of the Science Fiction Film*, entitled 'The Seducive Text of Metropolis', which focuses on the self-reflexive characteristics of the film and its alignment with postmodern concerns.
15. As quoted in John Baxter's *Science Fiction in the Cinema* (London: Zwemmer, 1970), p. 25.
16. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 126.
17. Ibid., p. 58.
18. Quoted in Leonard Heldreth's 'Clockwork Reels: Mechanical Environments in Science Fiction Films', *Clockwork Worlds: Mechanical Environments in Science Fiction*, ed. Thomas P. Dunn and Richard Erlich (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 214.
19. John Lechte, *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 40.
20. Roger Bromley, 'The Theme that Dare not Speak Its Name: Class and Recent British Film', *Cultural Studies and the Working Class*, p. 52.
21. Joanne Lacey, 'Discursive Mothers and Academic Fandom: Class, Generation and the Production of Theory', *Cultural Studies and the Working Class*, p. 40.
22. Calcutt, *White Noise: An A–Z of the Contradictions in Cyberculture*, p. 72.
23. Burner, *Making Peace with the 60s*, pp. 223–4.
24. Calcutt, *White Noise*, p. 84.
25. John Brosnan, *The Primal Screen: A History of Science Fiction Film* (London: Orbit, 1991), p. 239.
26. Although they are referred to as replicants in the film I consider them cyborg because they fit the parameters of this label outlined in the Introduction, including the fact that in Philip K. Dick's original novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1977), they are so physiologically akin to humans that only a bone marrow test can determine their true status – implying that they must be at least partly constituted of organic material.
27. Significantly, Deckard is first seen at ground level, yet the film suggests that his unemployment is very recent, as he is able to retain both his apartment (for which a worker ID number is requested before he gains entry) and the privileges associated with his former status.
28. In the original novel Zhora is a character called Luba Luft whose uncanny ability to project emotion as an opera singer is exchanged in the film for a convincing physicality.
29. David Desser, 'Race, Space and Class: The Politics of Cityscapes in Science Fiction Films', *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*, p. 94.
30. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 60.
31. Yves Chevrier, 'Blade Runner, or the Sociology of Anticipation', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 11, no. 32 (1984), p. 56.
32. Judith B. Kerman, 'Technology and Politics in the *Blade Runner* Dystopia' in *Retrofitting Blade Runner: Issues in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner and Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, ed. Judith B. Kerman (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1991), p. 19.
33. Desser, 'Race, Space and Class', *Alien Zone II*, p. 92.
34. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 1. See Chapter 7 for a further discussion of these ideas in relation to the cyborg film.
35. Glass, 'The New Bad Future', p. 44.
36. See Louis Althusser's *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971).
37. Julie F. Codell, 'Murphy's Law, RoboCop's Body, and Capitalism's Work', *Jump Cut*, vol. 34 (1989), p. 14.
38. Interview with Melvin Bragg in a profile of Paul Verhoeven, *The Southbank Show*, ITV, UK, 1996.

39. Gerald Mead and Sam Appelbaum, '*Westworld*: Fantasy and Exploitation', *Jump Cut*, no. 7 (1975), p. 13.
40. Ibid.
41. Robert Barringer, 'Skin Jobs: Humans and Racial Coding', *Jump Cut*, vol. 41 (1997), p. 15.
42. Fred Glass, 'Totally Recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 1 (Fall 1990), p. 3.
43. Ibid.
44. Alessandro Portelli, 'The Three Laws of Robotics', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 7, no. 21 (1980), p. 153.
45. Pask, 'Cyborg Economies: Desire and Labor in the *Terminator* Films', pp. 184–5.
46. Ibid., p. 194.
47. Ibid., p. 195.
48. The factory, devised as a Capitalist solution for harnessing labour and increasing productivity (and exemplified in *Metropolis*) is, by *Terminator 2* and *RoboCop*, a defunct place, yet the demise of America's auto industry – the epitome of Fordist rationalism of the labour force – signals not the end of Capitalism but its transition. As Codell points out, the factory's use for illicit drugs manufacturing reveals Capitalism's adaptability. 'Murphy's Law', p. 16.
49. Doran Larson, 'Machine as Messiah: Cyborgs, Morphs, and the American Body Politic', *Cinema Journal*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1997), p. 63.
50. Ibid., pp. 68–9.
51. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 204.
52. Larson, p. 69.
53. Glass, 'Totally Recalling Arnold', p. 6.
54. Ibid., p. 5.
55. J.P. Telotte, 'The Tremulous Public Body: Robots, Change, and the Science Fiction Film', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 14 (Spring 1991), p. 21.
56. Alison Landsberg, 'Prosthetic Memory: *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner*', *The Cybercultures Reader*, p. 197.
57. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p. 248.
58. Calcutt, *White Noise*, p. 138.
59. Ibid., p. 139.
60. Martin Barker and Kate Brooks, *Knowing Audiences: Judge Dredd, Its Friends, Fans, and Foes* (University of Luton Press, 1998), p. 2.
61. Ibid., p. 8.
62. Ibid., p. 17.
63. Ibid., p. 268.
64. Ibid., p. 290.
65. Ibid., p. 291.
66. Schelde, *Androids, Humanoids, and Other Science Fiction Monsters*, p. 243.
67. Telotte, 'The Tremulous Public Body', p. 21.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p. 23.
70. Ibid.
71. Richard Dyer, 'Entertainment and Utopia', *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 279.
72. Codell, 'Murphy's Law', p. 18.
73. Detailed by David M. Rorvik, *As Man Becomes Machine* (London: Sphere Books, 1979), p. 128.
74. Monica J. Casper, 'Fetal Cyborgs and Technomums on the Reproductive Frontier', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 185.
75. Gray, Mentor and Figueroa-Sarriera, 'Cyborgology', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 7.
76. William R. Macauley and Angel J. Gordo-Lopez, 'From Cognitive Psychologies to Mythologies: Advancing Cyborg Textualities for a Narrative of Resistance', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 442.

77. Judith Squires, 'Fabulous Feminist Futures and the Lure of Cyberculture', *The Cybercultures Reader*, p. 369.
78. Sharona Ben-Tov, *The Artificial Paradise: SF and American Reality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 141.
79. Gray, Mentor and Figueroa-Sarriera, 'Cyborgology', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 12.
80. Hugh Gusteson, '*Short Circuit*: Watching Television with a Nuclear-Weapons Scientist', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 116.
81. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 204.

4 The synthetic female: Cyborgs and the inscription of gender

1. Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body*, p. 11.
2. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 175.
3. Ibid., p. 174.
4. Ibid., p. 179.
5. Ibid., p. 183.
6. Ibid., p. 196.
7. Gill Kirkup, Introduction to *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 5.
8. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 197.
9. Ibid., p. 198.
10. Ibid., p. 201.
11. Balsamo, 'Reading Cyborgs, Writing Feminism', *The Gendered Cyborg*, p. 151.
12. See Joan Riviere's 'Womanliness as a Masquerade', *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Donald J. Burgin and C. Kaplan (London: Methuen, 1986); and Mary Anne Doane's 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen*, vol. 23 (Sept./Oct. 1982).
13. Mary Anne Doane, 'Film and the Masquerade', p. 81.
14. Sadie Plant, 'The Future Looms: Weaving Women and Cybernetics', *Cybersexualities*, p. 116.
15. Sobchack, 'The Virginity of Astronauts', *Alien Zone*, p. 106.
16. Ibid., p. 109.
17. Ibid., p. 114.
18. Sharon Willis, 'Hardware and Hardbodies: What Do Women Want?', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, p. 127.
19. Jasia Reichard, *Robots: Fact, Fiction, and Prediction* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1978), p. 12. Stranger still, according to Claudia Springer, the automaton was said to have physically resembled his illegitimate daughter. *Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Post-Industrial Age* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), p. 28.
20. Reichard, *Robots: Fact, Fiction, and Prediction*, p. 32.
21. As Geoff Simons points out in *Robots: The Quest for Living Machines* (London: Cassell, 1994), p. 179.
22. Reichard, *Robots: Fact, Fiction, and Prediction*, p. 32.
23. Rosalind Williams, *Notes on the Underground: An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 121–2. This metaphorical interpretation of the artificial female's signification is a point missed by most feminist critics of this story, who have tended to disregard Villiers' own cautionary intent.
24. Bellour, 'Ideal Hadaly', *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism and Science Fiction*, ed. by Constance Penley, Elizabeth Lyon, Lynne Spigel and Janet Bergstrom (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 132.
25. Thea von Harbou, *Metropolis* (orig. 1927, NY: Ace Paperbacks, 1963), pp. 53–4.
26. John Brosnan provides a chauvinistic response to the film's idea of female sex machines, objecting on issues of health and safety, together with the fact that 'the robot wives appear rather an unappetizing lot'. *The Primal Screen: A History of Science Fiction Film* (London: Orbit, 1991), p. 228.

27. Mark Dery compares this to Lacan's mirror stage of development in which the male self-image needs to be reinforced by the world around him, especially via women. *Escape Velocity*, p. 195.
28. The casting of Yul Brynnner as the black-hatted cowboy plays on these generic associations, even to the extent that he appears to be wearing the same costume as he did in *The Magnificent Seven*.
29. Reynold Humphries, '*Westworld*: A Capital Study of Film as Game and Spectacle', *Cinefantastique*, vol. 3, no. 3 (Fall 1974), p. 33.
30. For an interesting discussion of the ways in which Pris, Zhora and Rachel conform to archetypal noir roles, see Simon H. Scott's essay 'Is Blade Runner a Misogynist Text?' available on the *2019: Off-World* web-site.
31. J.P. Telotte, 'Human Artifice and the Science Fiction Film', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1982), p. 49.
32. This scene is particularly hard to watch because of the verbal complicity Deckard insists upon, and although its motivations could be explicated as a need to forcibly break through Tyrell's implants and overcome her programming, its implications are tantamount to the idea that when a woman says no she means otherwise, with Rachael the 'frigid tease' who wants it really.
33. Marleen Barr, 'Metahuman "Kipple", or, Do Male Movie Makers Dream of Electric Women? Speciesism and Sexism in *Blade Runner*', *Retrofitting* Blade Runner*: Issues in Ridley Scott's* Blade Runner *and Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, ed. by Judith B. Kerman (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press, 1991), p. 29.
34. Ridley Scott quoted in *Cult Movies 3* review of *Blade Runner*, Danny Peary (New York: Dell Publishing, 1984), p. 35.
35. As detailed in Paul M. Sammon's *Future Noir: The Making of* Blade Runner (London: Harper Collins, 1996), p. 92.
36. Barr, 'Metahuman Kipple', p. 30.
37. Some fans have proposed that Zhora recognises Deckard as a fellow replicant and that by asking whether he is 'for real' she indicates that he need not continue his pretence.
38. A similar memory game is perhaps played on audiences seeing the director's cut and 'remembering' the voice-over from the original in its silent spaces.
39. References are also made to examples of art history in this photograph. The convex mirror seen in the back of the room is reminiscent of Van Eyck's portrait of the Arnolfini Marriage in the clues it reveals, and Zhora's reposed figure and headdress is like an Ingres painting of an exotic. These references reveal an awareness of the collective world of artifice that preceded cinema and which is symbolically embodied by the replicants.
40. Judith Halberstam, 'Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Fall 1991), p. 443.
41. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 204.
42. Sadie Plant, 'Beyond the Screens: Film, Cyberpunk and Cyberfeminism', *Variant*, vol. 14 (Summer 1993), pp. 12–17.
43. Halberstam, 'Automating Gender', p. 454.
44. Mark Crispin Miller, 'The Robot in the Western Mind', *Boxed in: The Culture of TV* (Chicago: Evanston Northwestern University Press, 1988), p. 307. Where Miller may have a point in labelling her 'robotic' is the scene in which Ripley dons an exo-skeleton to do battle with the alien queen, yet her motivations for this clearly stem from a newfound 'maternal' instinct.
45. Claudia Springer, 'Muscular Circuitry: The Invincible Armoured Cyborg in Cinema', *Genders*, vol. 18 (Winter 1993), p. 97. The very irony of this comment seems lost on Springer who uncritically adopts a patriarchal viewpoint.
46. Dery, *Escape Velocity*, p. 265.
47. Ibid., p. 266.
48. Claudia Springer, 'The Pleasures of the Interface', *Screen*, vol. 32 (Autumn 1991), p. 320.
49. Ibid., p. 320.

50. Springer, 'Muscular Circuitry', p. 91.
51. Alison Adam, 'Feminist AI Projects and Cyberfutures', p. 286.
52. Halberstam, 'Automating Gender', p. 348.
53. Calcutt, *White Noise*, p. 34.
54. See Erica Sheen's article '"I'm not *in* the Business, I *am* the Business": Women at Work in Hollywood Science Fiction', *Where No Man has Gone Before: Essays on Women and Science Fiction*, ed. Lucie Armitt (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 139.
55. Quoted in 'Virtual Reality: Beyond Cartesian Space' by Sally Pryor and Jill Scott, *Future Visions: Technologies of the Screen*, ed. Philip Hayward and Tana Wollen (London: BFI Press, 1993), p. 175.
56. Pryor and Scott, 'Virtual Reality', p. 176.
57. Dery, *Escape Velocity*, p. 199.
58. Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), pp. 267–9.
59. Orlan's work, which includes reconstructing her face through cosmetic surgery to parody ideals of female beauty, is detailed and discussed by Mark Dery in *Escape Velocity*, pp. 239–41.
60. See Balsamo's chapter on elective surgery in *Technologies of the Gendered Body*.
61. Halberstam, 'Automating Gender', p. 454.
62. Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 119.
63. This is Jane Donawerth's description of Lee's novel in 'Woman as Machine in Science Fiction by Women' which claims that female writers often see machines as representative of the 'masculine' – alienated, cold and rational – and thus tend to reinscribe traditional gender assumptions prior to transforming such creatures. *Extrapolation*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1995), p. 211.
64. Reichard, *Robots: Fact, Fiction, and Prediction*, pp. 83–5.
65. Anca Vlasopolos, 'Technology as Eros's Dart: Cyborgs as Perfect (Male?) Lovers', *Foundation*, vol. 73 (Summer 1998), pp. 59–66.
66. An interesting early example of this tendency can be found in *Creation of the Humanoids* (Wesley E. Berry, 1962) which depicts a woman having an illicit relationship with her android servant, which is represented as the equivalent of miscegenation within the film's narrative.
67. Haraway, 'Cyborgs at Large: An Interview with Donna Haraway', Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, *Social Text*, vol. 25, pt. 6 (1990), p. 22.
68. Ibid., p. 23.
69. Christina Crosby, 'Allies and Enemies', *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, p. 207.
70. Halberstam, 'Automating Gender', p. 457.
71. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 204.
72. Ibid.
73. Plant, 'Beyond the Screens', p. 16.
74. JL, review of *Terminator 3, Metrolife* Magazine, 8–14 August 2003, p. 16.
75. See Andreas Huyssen's article, 'The Vamp and the Machine: Technology and Sexuality in Fritz Lang's Metropolis', *New German Critique* (Fall/Winter 1981–82), pp. 24–5.

5 The best of both worlds? Hybridity, humanity and the other

1. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 35.
2. See Homi K. Bhabha's article 'Culture's in Between' in David Bennet (ed.), *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1988) and his book *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994) for a further discussion of this idea.
3. Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes, Introduction to *Hybridity and Its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture*, ed. Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.

4. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 4.
5. For further information on this subject see the research findings discussed by Ann Phoenix and Charlie Owen in their article 'From Miscegenation to Hybridity: Mixed Relationships and Mixed Parentage in Profile', *Hybridity and Its Discontents*, pp. 72–95.
6. Ibid., p. 6.
7. Ibid., p. 7.
8. Evelynn M. Hammonds, 'New Technologies of Race', *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, ed. Gill Kirkup, Linda Janes, Kathryn Woodward and Fiona Hovendon (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 307.
9. Deborah Lynn Steinberg, 'Reading Genes/Writing Nation', *Hybridity and Its Discontents*, p. 148.
10. Graham Murdock, 'Cultural Studies at the Crossroads', *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), p. 86.
11. Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993). For a discussion of the argument Spivak makes, see John McLeod's *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 191–5.
12. Arif Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism', *Critical Inquiry*, 20 (Winter 1994), p. 329.
13. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Weed (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 178.
14. Sandoval, 'New Sciences', p. 414.
15. Joan W. Scott, 'Cyborgian Socialists?', *Coming to Terms*, p. 217.
16. Sharona Ben-Tov, *The Artificial Paradise: SF and American Reality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 145.
17. Haraway, quoted in 'Cyborgs at Large: Interview with Donna Haraway', Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, *Social Text*, vol. 25, pt. 6 (1990), p. 17.
18. Ibid., pp. 17–18.
19. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', *Coming to Terms*, p. 175.
20. Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man', *October* (Boston, Mass: MIT Press, 1987) quoted in 'Realism, Modernism and Post-Colonial Theory' by Ashish Rajadhyaksha, from *World Cinema: Critical Approaches*, ed. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 37.
21. While Martin yearns to win the love of a human female in the film version, his derision towards a 'female' android is all too evident. Galatea supposedly lacks the positronic deviations that make him so exceptional, is perceived as irretrievably dim-witted, and eventually becomes his servant!
22. For a more in depth discussion of this theme see my article 'The Measure of a Man? Asimov's Bicentennial Man, Star Trek's Data and Being Human', *Extrapolation*, vol. 44, no. 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 209–23.
23. Quoted in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 141.
24. Rhonda Wilcox, 'Dating Data: Miscegenation in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*', from *Enterprise Zones: Critical Positions on Star Trek*, ed. Taylor Harrison, Saraj Projansky, Kent A. Ono and Elyce Rae Helford (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 88.
25. Wilcox, 'Dating Data', p. 69.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 75.
28. Daniel Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-ing Toward a White Future* (Rutgers, 1998), p. 179.
29. Ibid., p. 57.
30. Ibid., p. 186.
31. Boyd, 'Cyborgs in Utopia', p. 107.
32. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, p. 53.

33. Roberta E. Pearson and Maire Messenger-Davies, 'You're not going to see that on TV': *Star Trek: The Next Generation* in Film and Television', *Quality Popular Television: Cult TV, the Industry and Fans*, ed. Mark Jancovich and James Lyons (London: BFI Press, 2003), p. 104.
34. Jo Labanyi, 'Miscegenation, Nation Formation and Cross-Racial Identifications', *Hybridity and Its Discontents*, p. 56.
35. According to their creator, Kit Pedlar, the cybermen also serve as an imaginary projection of humanity if augmentation is taken too far, warning: 'These men have sacrificed their arms, legs, their entire bodies in order to survive and become immortal. They could survive indefinitely. Perhaps we shall all go that way in the future' (David Banks, *Dr Who: Cybermen*, Virgin Books, 1990, p. 8). The Borg's use of prosthetics, their uniform appearance, and their urge to assimilate other species clearly link them to the Cybermen, as does their evolutionary parallel to humans.
36. See my article 'Capitalism and the Collective: Federation and Borg Value-Systems in *Star Trek*' for a more detailed comparison of the similarities that exist between each group. *Foundation*, December 2004.
37. Bernardi, *Star Trek and History*, p. 87.
38. Robin Roberts, *Sexual Generations: Star Trek: The Next Generation and Gender* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 7.
39. Kent A. Ono, 'Domesticating Terrorism: A Neocolonial Economy of *Différance*', *Enterprise Zones*, p. 171.
40. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1978, reprinted in *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), pp. 42, 44.
41. Ibid., p. 52.
42. Robin Roberts devotes a chapter in her book *Sexual Generations* to the theme of Troi's repeated role as a rape victim in the series. See '"No, I won't let you": Rape, Romance and Consent' which explicitly details the number of times this occurs. The mental rape she endures in *Nemesis* is particularly reminiscent of 'Violations' in which Riker's face again becomes that of her attacker. The film finally grants Troi revenge over her violation, and a key part in the plot, by using a link with the viceroy to detect the position of their cloaked vessel, yet the subject matter is distasteful nonetheless, particularly in the way it is treated in the narrative.
43. Prior to the Remun's creation, the Romulan's existed as the alter ego of the Vulcans, showing that, for all their similarity in appearance, without the self-discipline acquired by Vulcans in ridding themselves of emotion, they would be just like the Romulans, perpetually at war and without any nobler values.
44. Since Spock's gesture at the end of *The Wrath of Khan*, the motif of sacrifice has been used to prove the loyalty of various non-humans. Disgraced junior officer, Sito Jaxa, only clears her name through risking and ultimately losing her life in the *Next Generation* episode 'Lower Ranks' while the adolescent Borg Hugh's decision to sacrifice his newfound individuality in order to safeguard the Enterprise crew at the close of 'I, Borg' and the self-elimination of another young Borg, Juan, in *Voyager* episode 'Drone' provides each figure with temporary 'human' status. Yet as evidence of *Star Trek*'s own self-interrogation, the *Voyager* episode 'Tuvix' challenges this assumption of necessary sacrifice when a transporter malfunction fuses the molecular structure of two characters, creating another hybrid, dubbed Tuvix. Controversially, Captain Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) decides to sacrifice Tuvix by reversing the malfunction, invoking the Starfleet principle of giving a life to save another, yet killing him in the process.
45. Thomas Richards provides an extensive commentary on the family's depiction in *Star Trek* in his book, *Star Trek in Myth and Legend* (London: Orion, 1997), pp. 66–79.
46. Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 65.
47. Bernardi, *Star Trek and History*, pp. 130, 136.
48. Katrina G. Boyd, 'Cyborgs in Utopia: The Problem of Radical Difference in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*', *Enterprise Zones: Critical Positions on Star Trek*, ed. Taylor Harrison, Sarah Projansky, Kent A. Ono and Elyce Rae Helford (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 95, 97.

49. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 36.
50. Aylish Wood, *Technoscience in Contemporary American Film: Beyond Science Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 62.
51. Vivian Sobchack, *Screening Space*, p. 297.
52. Wood, *Technoscience in Contemporary American Film*, p. 120.
53. I am indebted to lin Quilty for pointing this analogy out to me.
54. Although Asimov put the phrase 'they're a cleaner better breed than we are' in the mouth of his fictional protagonist, Dr Susan Calvin, numerous interviews show him to be of the same opinion.
55. Amal Treacher, 'Welcome Home: Between Two Cultures and Two Colours', *Hybridity and Its Discontents*, p. 100.
56. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 403.
57. Treacher, 'Welcome Home', p. 98.
58. Ibid., p. 103.
59. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, p. 219.
60. Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura', p. 347.
61. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xxix.
62. Andrew Ross 'Cyborgs at Large: Interview with Donna Haraway', p. 13.
63. Stuart Hall, 'Minimal Selves', *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, p. 136.
64. Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura', p. 331.
65. Wood, *Technoscience in Contemporary American Film*, p. 145.
66. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (trans. Constance Farrington, 1961), quoted in *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 325.
67. Ibid.
68. The concept of hybridity as defined by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, p. 61.
69. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, pp. 52–3.

6 Heart and hearth: The cyborg and family values

1. Andrew Calcutt, *White Noise*, p. 105.
2. These films are also in keeping with the pro-gun lobby's favourite defence of the right to bear arms in order to protect families, paradoxically advocating the need to be violent as evidence of good parenting. A similar contradiction located within 'family values' is the murder of abortionists by militant 'pro-life' organisations who bizarrely legitimate killing in order to save lives.
3. John Huntingdon, 'SF and the Future', *SF: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Mark Rose (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 166.
4. Norman L. Friedman, 'The *Terminator*: Changes in Critical Evaluations of Cultural Productions', *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 28, pt. 1 (1994), p. 74.
5. For further analysis of this theme in *E.T.* see Vivian Sobchack's article, 'Child/Alien/Father: Patriarchal Crisis and Generic Exchange' in *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism and Science Fiction*, and Marina Hueng's 'Why E.T. Must Go Home: The New Family in American Cinema', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Summer 1983). Spielberg has acknowledged that the film is about his own parents' divorce, arguing that he believed being visited by an extraterrestrial character 'would be the perfect springboard to purge the pain of your parents' splitting up'. As told to Roger Ebert, *Chicago-Sun Times*, 18 December 1997 and reprinted in *The Radio Times Guide to Science Fiction*, ed. Kilmeny Fane Saunders (London: BBC Worldwide Limited, 2001), p. 111.
6. Sarah Harwood, *Family Fictions: Representations of the Family in 1980s Hollywood Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 3.
7. Ibid., p. 6.
8. Constance Penley, 'Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia', *Alien Zone*, p. 125.

9. Vivian Sobchack, *Screening Space*, p. 293.
10. Frances Bonner, 'Separate Development: Cyberpunk in Film and TV', *Fiction 2000*, p. 198.
11. *RoboCop 2* (Kershner, 1990) pitches the same theme as *Universal Soldier* (1992) by pitting 'bad' cyborgs against 'good' ones. Just why *RoboCop 2*'s Cain (Tom Noonan) or *Universal Soldier*'s Sergeant Scott (Dolph Lundgren) are so bad is never explained yet the inference is that each have had a poor upbringing, in contrast to their morally superior counterparts. More explicitly, *Hardware*'s Mark 13 and *Saturn 3*'s Hector are mechanical droids with 'wet-ware' equivalents of a human brain who acquire the deviant characteristics of dysfunctional male 'programmers', reiterating the need for the right parental 'input'.
12. Sobchack, 'Child/Alien/Father: Patriarchal Crisis and Generic Exchange', p. 6.
13. See the relevant texts by Dery and Springer cited in Chapter 4.
14. Sobchack, 'Child/Alien/Father', p. 3.
15. Such contradictions are summed up by the distaste for the 'new man' expressed by Donna Haraway in her 'Cyborgs at Large' interview with Constance Penley and Andrew Ross (and discussed in Chapter 4), for in stating that she regards male gentleness as yet another 'privilege' Haraway amply demonstrates a no-win situation that many men felt themselves to be in. It is this level of negativity, compounded by changes in economic position, that has frequently been cited by men as the cause for deserting households they no longer felt they were head of.
16. For a summary of Bly's work, see Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992), pp. 339–45.
17. Harwood, *Family Fictions*, p. 127.
18. Jonathan Goldberg, 'Recalling Totalities: The Mirrored Stages of Arnold Schwarzenegger', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 249.
19. It is also John who ensures that Dyson's under-age child does not see the terminator's ripped flesh by asking to see his bedroom prior to this exposure. As with *RoboCop 3, Terminator 2* reduces scenes of explicit violence in line with its lower certification yet the body count remains high, retaining all of the action while showing none of the consequences. Cynthia Fuchs has argued, in the case of *Terminator 2*, that its release around the time of the (first) Gulf War is significant, allowing audiences to witness violence 'without the guilt of looking at dead bodies'. 'Death is Irrelevant: Cyborgs, Reproduction, and the Future of Male Hysteria', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 290.
20. Pask, 'Cyborg Economies: Desire and Labor in the *Terminator* Films', *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, ed. Richard Dellamora (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 196.
21. Harwood, *Family Fictions*, p. 100.
22. The Director's Cut makes his estrangement from his family more explicit still, with Dyson's wife rebuking his negligence by asking 'why did we get married Miles? Why did we have children?'.
23. Much has been made of the fact that Dyson is black. Cynthia Fuchs perceives his death as racist, arguing that 'he dies to save a white woman and the future' ('Death is Irrelevant', p. 297). However, she also claims in the same article that the T-1000's guise as an LAPD officer is a deliberate critique of the Rodney King beating. Her attempt to have it both ways in arguing that the film is both racist and anti-racist encapsulates the burden of representation that black characters are often given. Carol Mason also considers Dyson's race to be important, and despite the high status of his occupation she insists upon reading him as an oppressed minority figure, largely by dint of the fact that he is black ('Terminating Bodies: A Cyborg History of Abortion', *Posthuman Bodies*, ed. Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995]). That neither Mason nor Fuchs can perceive his role as progressive, or even heroic, is odd, considering the sacrifice he makes in order to allow others, including his own family, to avoid a cataclysmic future. Both imply that his death preserves a form of cultural dominance, yet if the film makes any critique of Dyson, it is of his role as a father, and although his

sacrifice is potentially overshadowed by the terminator's own gesture at the end of the film, it nevertheless sets the precedent for such altruistic behaviour.

24. Within Murphy's vid-screen memory banks, Lazarus's face is mapped over those of his former wife and his deceased partner Lewis, as if to indicate that his memories of these women will be similarly overlaid and replaced by her. As to designing his flightpack, it is this new piece of gadgetry that enables him to protect the community and to save both herself and their surrogate daughter when threatened, thus proving how their relationship to one another is underpinned by technology.
25. In being of mixed race, Nico performs another function in the film, for like her cyborg father Murphy, she is also a hybrid, one whose dual parentage of Oriental and Caucasian origin implies that no racism is intended in the anti-Japanese plot.
26. It is notable that this new mother is not the assertive black female leader Bertha (C.C.H. Pounder), who initially fosters Nico at the beginning of the film, despite the fact that this would have created the most racially progressive of surrogate families. Although Bertha offers compassion and strength she does not have Dr Lazarus's technical know-how or youthful attractiveness and meets with an early death. Nancy Allen's character, Lewis, is presumably killed off for the same reason, in order to provide greater commercial viability.
27. *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) makes an interesting comparison to these films, particularly as the make-shift 'family' featured also have to look after themselves. Like Nikko, Alexis is another techno-kid whose ability to hack into the park's computer system crucially saves their lives. The emphasis on fathering is also evident, as Dr Grant (Sam Neill) acquires a paternal streak during the course of the film that contradicts his former antipathy towards children. Just as evolution has bred a predatory instinct within dinosaurs that cannot be tamed, family values are paralleled as a natural human trait. An urge to protect the young is defined as intrinsic to the species and those who think only of themselves promptly die. As Peter Kramer points out, the film aligns evolved paternal feelings with the dinosaurs' spontaneous transgendering, inferring that 'both in Grant and the dinosaurs, reproductive and family instincts cannot be suppressed'. See his article 'Would you take your child to see this film? The cultural and social work of the family-adventure movie' in *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Steve Neale and Murray Smith (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 303.
28. Pask, 'Cyborg Economies', p. 194.
29. It seems more than coincidental that this evil corporation share virtually the same name as invading aliens, the Kanemit, featured in classic *Twilight Zone* episode 'How to Serve Man' – aliens that initially appear benign yet are intent on consuming Earth's population. The parallel seems deliberate, to this writer at least.
30. The improbability of this act epitomises the hacker's dream of changing the world through gaining access to classified data and sharing information on the Net. Significantly, the underground community in the film have a number of computer consoles in their hide-out – a contemporary means of resistance in which guerrilla activity is merged with technological ability (including an alliance with RoboCop) in order to achieve success.
31. In a similar move we subsequently see the newscaster walk out of a live transmission of a doctored bulletin, unable to cope with such duplicity. This is a vision of solidarity as utopian as OCP's planned Delta City!.
32. Macauley and Gordo-Lopez, 'From Cognitive Psychologies to Mythologies: Advancing Cyborg Textualities for a Narrative of Resistance', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 437.
33. Barthes, *Mythologies* (originally published in 1957, trans. Annette Lavers, Glasgow: Collins, 1972), p. 150.
34. Macauley and Gordo-Lopez, *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 434.
35. Hilary Radner, 'New Hollywood's New Women', *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, p. 251.
36. Forest Pyle, 'Making Cyborgs, Making Humans', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, p. 239.

37. Richard Stanley admits to this deliberate pastiche in an interview with Mark Kermode 'Blow Up a Storm: The Making of *Dust Devil', Sight and Sound*, vol. 5 (September 1992), p. 14.
38. Fuchs, 'Death is Irrelevant', p. 294.
39. Personal interview with Richard Stanley, April 1998.
40. Thomas Doherty, 'Genre, Gender and the *Aliens* Trilogy', *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), p. 195.
41. Amy Taubin, 'Invading Bodies: *Alien 3* and the Trilogy', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 12, no. 3 (July 1992), p. 9.
42. Michael Eaton, 'Born Again', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 12 (December 1997), p. 12.
43. That we first see Ripley in a giant test-tube emphasises this symbolic resonance as a foetus.
44. Harwood, *Family Fictions*, p. 100.
45. Ibid., p. 101.
46. Sobchack, 'Child/Alien/Father', p. 12.
47. Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement, *The Newly Born Woman* (first published in 1975 as *La Jeune Nee*, reprinted by London: IB Tauris, 1996), p. 89.
48. Ibid., p. 89.
49. Harwood, *Family Fictions*, p. 73.
50. Susan Jeffords, 'The Big Switch: Hollywood Masculinity in the Nineties', *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, pp. 205–7.
51. Fred Pfeil, 'Home Fires Burning: Family Noir in *Blue Velvet* and *Terminator 2*', *Shades of Noir: A Reader*, ed. Joan Copjec (London: Verso, 1993), p. 243.
52. Ibid., p. 252.
53. Jonathan Mostow, interviewed in JAM Movies, Monday, 23 June 2003, comingsoon.net/news.
54. Chris Hables Gray and Steven Mentor, 'The Cyborg Body Politic', *The Cyborg Handbook*, p. 463.
55. Andrew Gordon, 'You'll Never Get Out of Bedford Falls! The Inescapable Family in American Science Fiction and Fantasy Films', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 20, pt. 2 (1992), p. 3.
56. Ibid.

7 Reality unplugged: Postmodernism, posthumanism, and the cyborg

1. As suggested by Larry McCaffery whose collection *Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991) is founded on the contention that cyberpunk represents 'the "postmodernization" of SF', p. 11.
2. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 152.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Ibid., p. 26.
5. Christopher Sharrett, introduction to *Crisis Cinema: The Apocalyptic Idea in Postmodern Narrative Film*, ed. Christopher Sharrett (Washington DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1993), p. 4.
6. Ibid., p. 9.
7. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 3.
8. Coined by Dery to sum up cyberculture's links with millenarian prophecy in *Escape Velocity*, p. 9.
9. Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'Defining the Postmodern', *The Cultural Studies Reader* (2nd edition), ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1st published 1993, 2nd edition published, 1999), pp. 142–4.
10. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p. 3.
11. Ibid., p. 6.
12. Ibid., p. 38.

13. As reported by Takayuki Tatsumi in 'An Interview with William Gibson', *Science Fiction Eye*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1987), p. 14.
14. That Gibson knowingly quotes Jameson in a later interview with Leslie Felperin and argues that his view of the 'postmodern sublime' is an accurate description of the present begs the question of whether the postmodern elements of Gibson's writing aren't more studied than accidental. 'Cloning the Future: Science Fiction Film 1895–1996', Supplement to *Sight and Sound* (November 1996), p. 22.
15. Bruce Sterling, quoted by Victoria Hollinger in 'Cybernetic Deconstructions: Cyberpunk and Postmodernism', *Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Fiction*, p. 206.
16. Scott Bukatman, 'Postcards from the Posthuman Solar System', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 18, no. 55 (November 1991), p. 351.
17. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 21.
18. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, p. 123.
19. Ibid., p. 121.
20. Jameson, 'Progress Vs Utopia; or, Can We Imagine the Future?', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1982), p. 153.
21. Larry McCaffery, *Storming the Reality Studio*, p. 14.
22. Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Indiana University Press, 1992), p. xiv.
23. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 46.
24. Timothy Bewes, *Cynicism and Postmodernity* (London: Verso Press, 1997), p. 207.
25. Scott Bukatman, 'Who Programs You?', *Alien Zone*, p. 199.
26. The introduction of this landmark edition asserts that without a previous essay on Baudrillard in fellow academic SF journal *Foundation* in 1984, the French philosopher would be unknown to English readers. That he made his name via SF criticism, as did Jameson to a large degree, is evidence of the debt owed to SF by these academics. See *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 18, no. 55, pt. 3 (November 1991) in which Baudrillard's review of *Crash* is claimed as 'the de facto founding manifesto of postmodern SF', p. 306.
27. Sobchack, responding in the same edition of *Science Fiction Studies*, in an article entitled 'Baudrillard's Obscenity', p. 328.
28. N. Katherine Hayles, 'In Response to Jean Baudrillard: The Borders of Madness', p. 322.
29. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 3.
30. Ibid., p. 284.
31. Brooks Landon, 'Baudrillard and the Killer B's' *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 18, no. 55, pt. 3 (November 1991), p. 326.
32. Brooks Landon, *The Aesthetics of Ambivalence: Rethinking Science Fiction Film in the Age of Electronic (Re)production* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 138.
33. Landon, *The Aesthetics of Ambivalence*, p. 152.
34. Ibid., p. 154.
35. Claudia Springer, 'Psycho-Cybernetics in Films of the 1990s', *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Annette Kuhn (London: Verso, 1999), p. 204.
36. Ibid., p. 205.
37. Ibid., p. 206.
38. Ibid., p. 207.
39. William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 12.
40. Paul Watson, *An Introduction to Film Studies* (3rd edition, London: Routledge, 2003), p. 163.
41. Pat Mellancamp, 'The Zen of Masculinity: Rituals of Heroism in *The Matrix*' 'The Zen of Masculinity: Rituals of Heroism in *The Matrix*' from *The End of Cinema as We Know It: American Film in the Nineties*, ed. Jon Lewis (New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 93.
42. Ibid.
43. Rutsky R.L. 'Being Keanu', *The End of Cinema as We Know It*, p. 189.
44. Ibid., p. 193.

45. Wheeler Winston-Dixon's 'Twenty Five Reasons Why It's All Over', *The End of Cinema as We Know It*, p. 357.
46. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 162.
47. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, 'Cyberpunk and Neuromanticism', *Storming the Reality Studio*, p. 190.
48. Rather appropriately, given the extent to which *The Matrix* has borrowed from martial arts films, its wirework stunts have also been endlessly imitated and even parodied in examples such as *Scary Movie* (Keenen Ivory Wayans, 2000) and *Charlie's Angels II: Full Throttle* (McG, 2003).
49. Rosenthal, 'Jacked In: Fordism, Cyberpunk, Marxism', p. 99.
50. Kim Newman, 'Rubber Reality', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 9, no. 6 (June 1999), p. 9.
51. Ian Freer, 'Battle Royale', *Empire Magazine*, issue 174 (December 2003), p. 95.
52. Perhaps most interesting among the host of titles aiming to decipher the *Matrix* films is *Exploring the Matrix: New Writings on the Matrix and the Cyberpresent*, which includes contributions by such noted cyberpunk writers as David Brin, Pat Cadigan, Bruce Sterling and John Shirley, proving themselves only too happy to capitalise on the renewed credibility given to cyberpunk by the trilogy.
53. Veronica Hollinger, 'Cybernetic Deconstructions: Cyberpunk and Postmodernism', *Storming the Reality Studio*, p. 215.
54. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p. 69.
55. Ibid., p. 21.
56. Ibid., p. 22.
57. Chris Hables Gray, *Cyborg Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 27–9.
58. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p. 247.
59. Ibid.
60. Patrick Novotny, 'No Future! Cyberpunk, Industrial Music and the Aesthetics of Postmodern Disintegration', ed. Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox, *Political Science Fiction* (University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 118–19.
61. Ibid., p. 111.
62. Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 240.
63. Pam Rosenthal, 'Jacked In: Fordism, Cyberpunk, Marxism', *Socialist Review*, vol. 21, pt. 1 (1991), p. 100.
64. In Lyotard's case, disillusionment set in after the events of May 1968 and John Lechte notably refers to him as 'the non-Marxist philosopher of postmodernity in the 1980s', *Fifty Contemporary Thinkers* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 246, while Douglas Kellner maintains that Baudrillard's disillusionment with Marxism stemmed from a disagreement with the French communist party that occurred in the late 70s, leading Baudrillard to abandon Marx and shift his attention from the conditions of material production to the concept of electronic reproduction. Douglas Kellner, *Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond* (London: Polity Press, 1989).
65. Glass, 'The New Bad Future', pp. 43–4.
66. Ibid., p. 44.
67. Ibid., p. 11.
68. Fredric Jameson, 'Progress Vs Utopia', p. 153.
69. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 1.
70. Ibid., p. 54.
71. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p. 16.
72. Stuart Hall, 'Minimal Selves', *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), p. 134.
73. Stuart Hall, quoted in *Spaces of Identity: Global Media Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, ed. David Morley and Kevin Robbins (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 206.
74. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 181.
75. Ross coins this phrase when he asks Donna Haraway how such openness of interpretation can be avoided in the 'Cyborgs at Large' interview, *Social Text*, vol. 25, pt. 6 (1990), p. 13.

76. Carol Mason, 'Terminating Bodies: A Cyborg History of Abortion', *Posthuman Bodies*, ed. Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 226.
77. Casimir, 'Data and Dick's Deckard', p. 282.
78. Ibid., p. 283.
79. David Porush, 'Frothing the Synaptic Bath', *Storming the Reality Studio*, pp. 332–3.
80. Ibid., p. 323.
81. Telotte, *Replications*, p. 165.

8 Summing up the cyborg: Towards a conclusion

1. Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', p. 204.
2. Ibid., p. 204.
3. Ibid., p. 175.
4. Hugh Gusteson, '*Short Circuit*: Watching Television with a Nuclear-Weapons Scientist', *The Cyborg Handbook*, pp. 109–10.
5. Ibid., p. 115.
6. Glass, 'The New Bad Future', p. 9.
7. Ibid., p. 21.
8. Andrew Ross, *Strange Weather: Culture, Science and Technology in the Age of Limits* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.
9. Heather L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture*, p. 141.
10. Ibid., p. 177.
11. Alison Landsberg, 'Prosthetic Memory: *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner', The Cybercultures Reader*, p. 190.
12. Ibid., p. 199.
13. Glass, 'Totally Recalling Arnold', p. 7.
14. J.P. Telotte, 'The Tremulous Public Body: Robots, Change, and the Science Fiction Film', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 14 (Spring 1991), p. l5.
15. Ibid., p. 17.
16. Garrett Stewart, 'Body Snatching: Science Fiction's Photographic Trace', *Alien Zone II*, p. 220.
17. Philip K. Dick, 'How to Build a Universe that Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later', introduction to *I Hope I Shall Arrive Soon* (London: Grafton, 1988), p. 32.
18. I am indebted to Peter Wright for reminding me of this crucial point.
19. Peter Ohlin, 'Science Fiction Film Criticism and the Debris of Postmodernism', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 18, no. 55, pt. 3 (November 1991), p. 411.
20. James Cameron, quoted by Sean French in *The Terminator* (London: BFI Press), p. 39.
21. Ibid., p. 54.
22. Goldberg, 'Recalling Totalities', p. 243.
23. Ibid., p. 243.
24. Samantha Holland, 'Descartes Goes to Hollywood: Mind, Body and Gender in Contemporary Cyborg Cinema', *Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk: Cultures of Technological Embodiment*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows (London: Sage, 1995), p. 161.
25. Holland, 'Descartes Goes to Hollywood', p. 161.
26. Ibid., p. 162.
27. Vivian Sobchack, 'Beating the Meat/Surviving the Text, or How to Get Out of this Century Alive', *Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk*, p. 210.
28. Ibid., p. 213.
29. Clynes, quoted in David M. Rorvik's *As Man Becomes Machine: The Evolution of the Cyborg* (London: Sphere Books, 1973), p. 133.
30. Claudia Springer, *Electronic Eros*, p. 77.

31. Cornell West, 'A Matter of Life and Death', *The Identity in Question*, ed. John Rajchman (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 18–19.
32. Andrew Ross, *Strange Weather*, p. 170.
33. Kellner, *Media Culture*, pp. 19–20.
34. Ibid., p. 98.
35. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 3.
36. Ibid., p. 5.
37. Cornell West, 'The New Cultural Politics of Difference', *The Question of Identity*, ed. John Rajchman (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 171.
38. Amin Maalouf, *On Identity* (London: Harhill-Panther, 2000), p. 129.
39. Gray and Mentor, 'The Cyborg Body Politic', p. 465.
40. Jennifer Terry and Melodie Calvert, introduction to *Processed Lives*, p. 9.
41. Gray, *Cyborg Citizen*, p. 31.
42. Ibid., p. 190.
43. Ibid., p. 199.
44. Calcutt, *White Noise*, p. 137.
45. Scott Bukatman, 'Terminal Penetration', *The Cybercultures Reader*, p. 159.
46. Ibid., p. 159.
47. Ibid., pp. 163–4.
48. See Spivak's *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988).
49. Landsberg, 'Prosthetic Memory', p. 199.
50. Indeed, the four page story by Brian Aldiss, 'Super-Toys Last All Summer Long', has a much more adult premise and tone, with enforced population control adding poignancy as well as plausibility to the creation of artificial children, together with relating such themes as the paradox of loneliness on an overcrowded planet, the inability for a mother and child to communicate, and the reprehensibility of creating life-forms that are, to all intents and purposes, human.
51. Kathleen Kennedy, feature article on *AI: Artificial Intelligence* entitled 'Strangelove' by Ian Freer, *Empire* magazine, issue 148 (October 2001), p. 59.
52. My thanks to Peter Wright and Andy Sawyer for this important point.
53. The persistence of religious iconography in the cyborg film is also interesting in this regard. *Blade Runner* plays with Christian imagery in terming Roy Batty as a prodigal son, driving a nail through his palm, and releasing a dove prior to his death. *The Terminator* films also draw upon Christian mythology, particularly in having humanity's future saviour share the same initials as Jesus Christ, while Neo takes this referencing a stage further in returning the dead to life, as he does with both Morpheus and Trinity, and in sacrificing himself for the sake of humanity. Yet perhaps the strangest example is found in *Alien: Resurrection* when Call crosses herself in front of a crucifix. The implication is that morality is intrinsically connected to Christianity, which serves as yet another value-system, like the belief in families and heterosexual love that are tacitly supported in such narratives.
54. All these claims were voiced in the 'Cybersouls' documentary from the *Digital Planet* series tie-in with the Open University, broadcast on BBC 2 in 1999. In 1998 Professor Warwick had a silicon chip inserted into his flesh for nine days. Signals from the implant were transmitted to a computer, allowing him to walk through electronically operated doors without a pass. After its removal he reported that he felt as though he had lost a friend.
55. Sobchack, *Screening Space*, p. 229.
56. Barry K. Grant, 'Invaders from Mars and the Science Fiction Film in the Age of Reagan', *CineAction!* vol. 77, no. 8 (Spring 1987).

Select Filmography

AI: Artificial Intelligence (Steven Spielberg, 2001)
Alien (Ridley Scott, 1979)
Aliens (James Cameron, 1986)
Alien 3 (David Fincher, 1992)
Alien: Resurrection (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1997)
Alraune (Heinrich Galeen, 1928)
Android (Aaron Lipstadt, 1982)
Bicentennial Man (Chris Columbus, 1999)
Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
D.A.R.Y.L (Simon Wincer, 1985)
Eve of Destruction (Duncan Gibbins, 1991)
Gattaca (Andrew Niccol, 1997)
Ghost in the Machine (Rachel Talalay, 1993)
Hardware (Richard Stanley, 1990)
Johnny Memnomic (Robert Longo, 1995)
The Lawnmower Man (Brett Leonard, l992)
Making Mr Right (Susan Seidelman, 1987)
The Matrix (Andy and Larry Wachowski, l999)
The Matrix: Reloaded (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 2003)
The Matrix: Revolutions (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 2003)
Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1926)
The Perfect Woman (Bernard Knowles, 1949)
Pitch Black (David Twohy, 1999)
RoboCop (Paul Verhoeven, 1986)
RoboCop 2 (Irvin Kershner, 1990)
RoboCop 3 (Fred Dekker, 1993)
Screamers (Christian Duguay, 1995)
Short Circuit (John Badham, 1986)
Short Circuit 2 (Kenneth Johnson, 1988)
The 6th Day (Roger Spottiswoode, 2000)
Solo (Norberto Barba, 1996)
Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (Nicholas Meyer, 1982)
Star Trek VII: Generations (David Carson, 1994)
Star Trek VIII: First Contact (Jonathan Frakes, 1996)
Star Trek IX: Insurrection (Jonathan Frakes, 1998)
Star Trek X: Nemesis (Stuart Baird, 2002)
The Stepford Husbands (Fred Walton, 1996)
The Stepford Wives (Bryan Forbes, 1975)
The Terminator (James Cameron, 1984)
Terminator 2: Judgment Day (James Cameron, 1991)
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (Jonathan Mostow, 2003)
Total Recall (Paul Verhoeven, 1990)
The Truman Show (Peter Weir, 1998)
Universal Soldier (Roland Emmerich, 1992)
Virtuosity (Brett Leonard, 1995)
Weird Science (John Hughes, 1985)
Westworld (Michael Crichton, 1973)
X-Men (Bryan Singer, 2000)
X-2: Mutants United (Bryan Singer, 2002)

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